AN

ESSAY

Concerning the

POWER of the MAGISTRATE, and the *Rights* of *Mankind*, in Matters of Religion.

With ſome Reaſons in particular for the Diſſenters not being obliged to take the *Sacramental Teſt* but in their own Churches; and for a *General Naturalization*.

Together with a *Poſtſcript* in Anſwer to the *Letter to a Convocation-Man*.

by Tindal?

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An

An ESSAY Concerning the Power of the MAGISTRATE, &c.

CHAP. I.

That Government is from the People, who had a right to invest the Magistrate with a Power in those Matters of Religion which have an Influence on Humane Societies, but not in others that are meerly Religious, or have no such Influence.

1. A Discourse on this Subject cannot be unseasonable, whilst so many, instead of shewing their Gratitude to the Government for rescuing them from the apparent Danger of Popish Persecution, are so disaffected for being depriv'd of the Power of persecuting their Brethren, that they had rather run the risque of the Nation's being ruined by the French,

and themſelves under Popiſh Perſecution, than to be without that Power; and for want of it, do in their daily invective Diſcourſes and Sermons (beſides a great many other malicious Inſinuations) pretend the Church now to be nearer its Ruin than it was in the late Reign.

I cannot but be ſenſible I incur a great hazard of expoſing my ſelf, by writing on a Subject in a manner wholly exhauſted by the three incomparable Letters concerning Toleration; which yet I had rather do, than be wanting in my Endeavours to encourage impartial Liberty and mutual Toleration; which inſtead of ruining, is the only way to preſerve both Church and State. Yet this was not the only Motive that engag'd me in this Deſign; for intending to write concerning what is commonly called *Church* or *Eccleſiaſtical Power*, I thought it neceſſary, for the better handling that Subject, firſt to examine the Extent of the Magiſtrate's Power in Matters of Religion, leſt the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Power ſhould in my Diſcourſe (what in the World they frequently do) claſh one with the other. I ſhall therefore, without further prefacing, attempt to ſhew what Power the Magiſtrate has in Matters of Religion. Tho to prevent all occaſion of Miſtake or Cavil, I ſhall firſt explain thoſe Terms.

2. By

2. By the Magiſtrate, I mean the *Perſon or Perſons who in every Society have the Supream Power*, which conſiſts in a Right to make Laws, and by Force (without which all Laws would be to no purpoſe) to oblige the Unwilling and Diſobedient to govern their Actions according to them.

3. By Religion, I underſtand the Belief of a God, and the Senſe and Practice of thoſe Duties which reſult from the Knowledg we have of him and our ſelves, and the Relation we ſtand in to him and our fellow Creatures; or in ſhort, what-ever appears to us from any convincing Evidence to be our Duty to believe or practiſe.

4. In things relating to our ſelves, or what is in our diſpoſal, any Action is lawful where there is no Law to forbid it: But there is more than this required to inveſt a Man with a Right to deprive others of their natural Freedom, and make Laws that in Conſcience oblige them. Whoever pretends to this, muſt have a Commiſſion either from God or Men: but there is no Perſon that can pretend to have an immediate Commiſſion from God; therefore they that lay the Foundation of any Magiſtrate's Power, not on a Humane, but a Divine Right, deſtroy all Obligation of Obedience to him: for why ſhould I be oblig'd to obey him on the account of a Divine Commiſſion, when he can neither ſhow, nor ever

had any ſuch Commiſſion? And there are none of his Subjects but what have as good a Pretence (that is, juſt none at all) to a Divine Right. Therefore ſince no Man can pretend an immediate Right from Heaven, all the Right that one more than another has to command, muſt be the Conſent of the Governed, either explicitly or implicitly given. But it's ſaid, the *Powers that be are ordain'd of God*; which may very fitly and juſtly be ſaid, ſince they are choſen and appointed by thoſe, who had not only a Power from God to chuſe them, but were abſolutely required by the Law of Self-preſervation (imprinted by God on their Natures) to avoid the Inconveniences and Dangers of an unſafe State of Nature, by placing the Power of governing them in one or more Hands, in ſuch Forms, and under ſuch Agreements as they ſhould think fit. To ſuppoſe the Powers that be, to be otherwiſe from God than as they are the Creatures of the People, made by them, and for them, is not only to contradict St. *Peter*, who calls Government κτίσις ἀνθρωπίνη, the Creature or Contrivance of Man, but the Experience of all Ages, wherein Men have contrived and framed various ſorts of Governments, as they thought moſt convenient for themſelves: which makes it ſufficiently evident that all the Powers the Magiſtrates have, are the Gift of their fellow Men. And,

5. It's as evident that Men could not give the Magiſtrate a Power they themſelves had not. Now by the Law of Nature no Man had a Right to deprive another of his Life, Liberty, or Property, but in defence and for the preſervation of his Own, which by that Law he is obliged to preſerve, and conſequently had a Right to what-ever is neceſſary to that End. But the Difficulty of exerciſing this Right, (every one having the ſame) obliged Men to enter into Societies, and to commit to ſome particular Perſons the Inſpections of thoſe things that relate to their common Good: So that Matters of Right and Wrong, and generally all that part of Morality relating to the reciprocal Duties of Man to Man, are under the Cogniſance of the Magiſtrate; and any Man (tho he never ſo much pretends Conſcience) may be puniſhed for acting againſt the Welfare of the Society; becauſe no Man's Conſcience ought to hinder the Magiſtrate from diſcharging his Truſt.

6. But his Power does not extend to thoſe Duties only that one Man owes another, but even to thoſe that Man owes to God; I mean thoſe that have an influence on Humane Life, and conduce to the Welfare and Support of Societies, *viz.* the acknowledging a Supreme Being, who can diſcern Mens Actions, and is both willing and able to puniſh them for neglecting thoſe Duties that are neceſſary for

the well-being of Mankind. It being impoſſible (as is own'd by Pagans as well as Chriſtians) that any Society can ſubſiſt without ſome Notions of Religion, or the acknowledging of Inviſible Powers. Therefore the Magiſtrate is obliged to puniſh thoſe who deny the Exiſtence of a God, or that he concerns himſelf with Humane Affairs; it being the belief of theſe things that preſerveth them in Peace and Quiet, and more effectually obliges them to be true to their Promiſes and Oaths, and to perform all their Covenants and Contracts, and all thoſe other Duties in which their mutual Happineſs conſiſts, than all the Rods and Axes of the Magiſtrate. Nor can the Maintainers of Atheiſtical Principles, ſeeing they deſtroy Conſcience by ſubverting all Religion, have any Pretence from it to challenge to themſelves a Toleration. And this is no greater Power than one Man had over another in the State of Nature; for an Atheiſt may juſtly be reckoned an Enemy to Mankind whatſoever State they are in, and therefore is to be diſarmed, and bound to his good behaviour. So far then it's evident that the Magiſtrate's Power extends in Matters of Religion. But,

7. As to thoſe Opinions and Actions which relate to God alone, in which no third Perſon has an Intereſt, wherein conſcientious People may and do differ, (which I call meerly Religious, to diſtinguiſh them from thoſe where-

in

in others have an Intereſt) there is no Law of Nature that gives one Man a Right to uſe Force on another; and conſequently they could not inveſt any of their Brethren with this Power. All the Right that Equals (as all by Nature are) have over one another, is a Right to prevent or repel Force by Force, and to puniſh the Aggreſſor, thereby to diſcourage him or any other from attempting the like, and to ſeek Reparation for the Loſs ſuſtained.

They that have no ſuch Power over themſelves, as to do themſelves any Hurt, much leſs to take away their own Lives, have as little Right to deprive others (whom they are obliged to love as themſelves) of their Lives or Properties, or commit any Violence on them otherways than may be neceſſary to defend themſelves, and their own Rights. But what Right of his Neighbour's does any Man invade? or what Injury or Injuſtice does he do him, in worſhipping God according to that Method he judgeth beſt for the ſaving his own Soul? If Men think one another in the Wrong, common Charity will oblige them to ſhew each other their Errors; but this gives neither a Right to puniſh, becauſe neither of them are any-wiſe injured: And it's againſt the immutable and eternal Law of Juſtice, to puniſh a Perſon that neither does, nor deſigns to do another an Injury. Yea,

Chriſtianity, that requires Men to abſtain from Revenge, even after repeated Provocations, and multiplied Injuries, can much leſs be ſuppoſed to oblige them, who ſuffer nothing, nor have any Harm done them, to moleſt and ill uſe their Brethren.

8. If the Magiſtrate was intruſted by the Society to uſe Force on thoſe that hold wrong Tenets in things merely religious, this Power upon his Neglect, or Incapacity to uſe it, would devolve on them that gave it him; and then every one would have the ſame Right to uſe Force on them that are in the Wrong, as to uſe it in defence of their own Lives and Properties, when the Magiſtrate either upon the ſuddenneſs of the Danger, or otherwiſe, does not protect them.

It's an undeniable Argument, that Government, or (in other words) the Right to uſe the Force of the Society, in defence of the Peoples Lives or Properties, is their own Gift; becauſe when the Magiſtrate does not this, the Right of defending themſelves returns to every one of them, (who may in defence of themſelves, or what belongs to them, take away the Life of an Invader) and ſo muſt the Right of uſing Force in Matters of meer Religion, upon the Magiſtrate's either not uſing or miſuſing it, had they at firſt intruſted him with it. But they were ſo far from having ſuch a Right one upon the other in the State

of

of Nature, that Force to bring a Man to a Religion which he thinks not true, was an Injury, which in that State every one would avoid; and conſequently Protection from that as well as any other Injury, was one of the Ends of conſtituting Civil Society.

9. Could Men have liv'd in Peace, without any fear of Fraud or Violence one from the other, there would have been no need of Government: Nor can it be ſuppoſed that Men who are by Nature equal, would have ſubmitted their Lives and Properties to the Diſcretion of a ſingle, or a few Perſons, but to prevent thoſe greater Inconveniences. And that which was the End of erecting Government, ought certainly to be the Meaſure of its Proceeding. Now it's evident Men might have lived peaceably and quietly together, and yet have differ'd in thoſe things that give no biaſs to their Converſation, or Actions, with reſpect to one another as Members of the Society; and therefore the uſing Force in theſe Matters was not one of the Ends of uniting under Laws, and ſubmitting to Government, but the direct contrary to prevent it; and conſequently every one by being a Member of a Civil Society, has as much Right to be protected in his Religious Worſhip, as in any other Matter whatever. And if in Civil Matters the Magiſtrate never does, and it would be look'd on as an Injuſtice if he ſhould any

farther

farther than relates to the good of the Publick, enjoin Men the Care of their Private Concerns, or force them to a proſecution of their Private Intereſt, but only protect them from being invaded, (which is much the ſame as Toleration) there is the ſame reaſon he ſhould no farther uſe Force in Matters of Religion, than the Publick Good is concerned, and only protect Men from being injured by others in their Private Concerns between God and themſelves.

10. To ſuppoſe that one Man in the State of Nature had a Right to uſe Force on another on the account of meer Religion, is to ſuppoſe that State a State of Anarchy, War, and Confuſion; becauſe every one ſuppoſing himſelf in the right, and not being willing to ſubmit to another, there muſt neceſſarily happen perpetual Quarrels, Confuſions and Deſtruction, which is contrary to the Law of right Reaſon, whereby in that State Men were wholly to be governed. The only Difference between being in a State of Nature, and under Government, conſiſts in this, that under Government Men have debarred themſelves from exerciſing their natural Rights, and intruſted the Magiſtrate to do thoſe things that in the State of Nature every one of them had a Right to do; ſo that the Magiſtrate's Power is not larger, but theirs more contracted than it was in that State.

11. If

11. If in the State of Nature Men had a Right to uſe Force one upon the other for Differences of Opinion; different Nations, who with reſpect to one another are ſtill in that State, may upon that account juſtly uſe it, which would involve almoſt all Nations (ſince there are ſcarce any but differ, and in their own Opinions, very materially) in endleſs Wars. But they are ſo far from thinking they ought to make War for this Reaſon, that by the Sacred Laws of Nations, Ambaſſadors, and all veſted with a Publick Character, have a Right to exerciſe their own Religion in the Country they are ſent to, tho never ſo contrary to that there eſtabliſhed. But,

12. If the Magiſtrate of one Society has no Right to uſe Force on the Members of another, he can have as little to uſe it on thoſe of his own, becauſe in becoming their Governour, he has obliged himſelf to promote their Happineſs and Welfare: And he that is entruſted with a Power for the Good of the Society, can never have a Right to uſe it to the Prejudice of it, as he manifeſtly does who deprives his Subjects either of their Lives or Properties for things that do not relate to the Safety or Good of the Civil Society.

Which either againſt Foreign or Domeſtick Enemies, is beſt provided for by the Peoples Union, which ariſes from the mutual Enjoyments of their Liberty, whereby the Source and

and Foundation of Domeſtick Enmities is taken away, and their Strength againſt Foreign Enemies encreaſed; which Union, and with it the general Welfare of the People, can only be ſecured by ſuch a Conduct in the Governors, as gives impartial Encouragement to all that are Vertuous and Induſtrious, and perfect Security to every one in the Fruits of their Labours: Which is altogether inconſiſtent with the Magiſtrate's depriving them of thoſe Fruits, or any part of them, for Matters meerly Religious, which can only tend to divide a People into Parties and Factions, and to weaken the State by their Diſunion, and endanger it by their Diſcontents.

But this is not the worſt; it neceſſarily tends to the ruining and beggaring of a Nation, not only by deſtroying all Encouragement to Induſtry, Frugality, and Labour, but by depriving People of the Means to carry on thoſe Trades, upon which the Safety and Riches of a Nation depend; which muſt in time depopulate a Country, as we find evident in all thoſe where Men are not ſecure in the enjoyments of the Fruits of their own and their Anceſtors Labours. But ſuch Tyranny is much more deſtructive, when it happens upon the Account of Religion; then it wholly falls on the truly Religious, and Conſcientious, who are the moſt Juſt, moſt Frugal, moſt Induſtrious, and in a word moſt ſerviceable

to

to their Country both in Peace and War: For that Conſcience that makes them ſuffer rather than act againſt it, cauſeth them to abound with all thoſe moral Vertues (about which there are no Contentions) that are neceſſary and uſeful to the Publick.

But becauſe I ſhall have further occaſion to mention the fatal Conſequences of Perſecution, I ſhall only add here, that there never was a Nation (eſpecially a trading One, where Men could with eaſe remove themſelves and their Effects) long either Rich, Populous or Happy, where Perſecution prevail'd: And on the contrary, no Nation but what has thriven proportionably as they have allowed a Toleration.

13. In a word, ſince it's the Magiſtrate's Duty to preſerve as much as poſſible, when it's not contrary to the greater Good of the Society, the Property, Quiet and Life of every individual Perſon; neither Man nor God can oblige him to inconſiſtent or contradictory things, *viz.* to do this, and deprive the Members of the Society of theſe, when the Good of it is not concerned: But the more the Good of the Society forbids him, the more he is obliged to uſe Force, becauſe as the Number of thoſe he judges to be erroneous encreaſes; ſo not only the Number of the Sufferers, but even their Sufferings ought to encreaſe, to put a ſtop to thoſe ſpreading Errors.

But

But the more the Sufferers are, and the more they ſuffer, the more the Publick is damnified; ſo that it's evident the Magiſtrate cannot be obliged both to promote the Publick Good, and to uſe this Power. Nay, the very exerciſing ſuch a Power is inconſiſtent with Government, and as far as it extends deſtroys it: becauſe a Deſign to deprive People, not only of their Lives, but Properties, (for conſervation of which Government was inſtituted, and therefore more ſacred than Government it ſelf) and a Deſign to govern them are inconſiſtent. And has not the Magiſtrate ſuch a Deſign, when he invades the Peoples Rights for things not tending to the Good of the Society, nor as much as in their Power, but morally impoſſible, ſuch as acting contrary to their Conſcience is? And it's a greater piece of Tyranny to puniſh Men for what is morally, than what is naturally impoſſible.

14. If the Magiſtrate on pretence of the Honour of God, or the Good of Souls, can uſe Force to make Men of that Religion he judgeth to be true, there can be no reaſon why the ſame religious Cauſes ſhould not oblige the diſſenting Subjects to uſe Force on the Magiſtrate and his Sect, in order to cauſe them to be of that Religion they judg to be true. The ſame reaſon that will juſtify one, will equally juſtify the other: For Property is no more founded in ſpeculative Opinions or ceremo-

nial

nial Practices, than Dominion is; and the Magiſtrate is as much bound to protect his Subjects, and not to deſtroy their Privileges, as they are to obey him, and not to invade his Prerogatives. The Duties are reciprocal, and conſequently one Party cannot be bound, but the other muſt be ſo too, ſo that both or neither are free to uſe Force in ſuch Caſes.

It's ſaid, the Good of the Society hinders the Subjects from uſing Force: The ſame Reaſon then muſt hinder the Magiſtrate too, becauſe Men will not endeavour to uſe Force againſt him, but when they judg themſelves ſtrong enough, and then they will (whatever Paſſive Principles they may pretend) as little fail to do it, if he perſecutes them; and in the mean time they muſt ſuffer all he will inflict: which makes the Argument to conclude much ſtronger againſt the Magiſtrate; the Abuſe of whoſe Power produces greater and more unavoidable Miſchiefs to Mankind than any thing elſe can.

15. By what has been ſaid, I think it's evident that Men, tho they are anſwerable to God for every Breach of his Laws, yet are accountable to one another, for thoſe things only that relate to their mutual Security and Welfare; becauſe every Man has ſo much Intereſt (and no more) in another's Conduct; and therefore Government is no further concerned in Matters of Religion, than as the Principles or Practices

Practices of the different Profeſſors tend to make them more or leſs fit for the Duties of the Society. For which Reaſon thoſe *Opinions* that are meerly Speculative, or Practices that are purely Ceremonial, as having no relation at all to the true Foundation of Government, ought to be tolerated; for nothing can be evidently more unjuſt, than for the Repreſentative of the Civil Society (as the Magiſtrate is) to deprive any of the Rights of the Society, who has done nothing againſt its Intereſt: nor can any thing be more ridiculous, than to ſuppoſe a Man's Rights to the enjoyment of this Life, ought to depend upon his thinking juſt as the Magiſtrate does about Things relating to the next; or that a Man's Property in this World is founded upon his having right Notions of Things no ways relating to it; which is as abſurd as that Property is founded in Grace: and there is as much diſpute who is in the right Opinion, as who has Grace, every one alike pretending to it, and none being obliged to ſubmit to the Determination of another.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That God has not, either by the Law of Nature, or his positive Law, given the Magistrate a Power in Matters meerly Religious.

SINCE it appears that the Magistrate has not his Power immediately from God, but from the People; and that God has not authoriz'd or capacitated them to bestow a Right on him to use Force in Cases of meer Religion, it necessary follows that he has no such Right. But however, to avoid all pretence of Cavilling, let us suppose, that Government, both as to the Form and to the Persons that administer it, is immediately from God; yet still it's most evident that the Magistrate has no such Power.

1. Which thus I prove: A Right in the Magistrate to punish for not doing as he commands, necessarily supposes it a Duty in the Subject to obey, otherwise he would punish a Man for not doing what he is not obliged to do: and where there is no Power to make Laws, or to command, there can be no Disobedience; and where there is no Disobedience, there punishing on pretence of Disobeying is manifestly unjust. But that God has the sole Legislative Power in Matters

meerly Religious, or what only concerns himſelf, and can alone preſcribe what Honour, Worſhip, *&c.* ſhall be paid him, none (I ſuppoſe) will deny; therefore the Magiſtrate has no *Legiſlative* nor *Coercive* Power, which cannot ſubſiſt without Legiſlation, to which it neceſſarily adheres. And,

2. As God has reſerv'd to himſelf the ſole Legiſlature, ſo he has not given the Magiſtrate a Right to interpret for others his Law, or to impoſe on them in what ſenſe they muſt underſtand it. But he has endowed Men in general with *Reaſon*, which is the only Guide he has obliged them to follow in judging of the Senſe and Meaning of his Laws; and he that does not follow it, degrades himſelf from the Rank of rational Creatures, and highly offends God. And this is not only evident by the *Light of Nature*, but confirmed by God's *Poſitive Law*, which frequently commands us to make uſe thereof in Matters of Religion: We are bid *to prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good; to try the Spirits; to let no Man deceive us; to beware of falſe Prophets, Seducers, Deceivers; to judg of our ſelves what is right.* But how ſhall we judg and try? *Not as the Horſe and Mule which have no Underſtanding, but as Circumſpect and Wiſe*; that is, by making uſe of thoſe Faculties God has given us to diſcern between Truth and Falſhood, Good and Evil.

And

And he not only forbids us to act contrary to our Judgment, but requires we ſhould be fully ſatisfied before we act: For he that acts when *he doubts, is damn'd*; and *whatſoever is not of Faith, is Sin.* The Reaſon is moſt evident, why a Man ought not to do an Action when he judges it to be ill, becauſe to judg an Action to be ill, or diſpleaſing to God, is the ſame; and he that forms ſuch a Judgment of an Action, and yet does it, does knowingly and willingly diſpleaſe God, which is eternally and eſſentially ill, becauſe no Circumſtances what-ever can make it lawful for a Creature to do that which he judges will offend his Creator, or even to act when he doubts whether it will or no. If then God rewards and puniſhes Men according as they have followed the Dictates of their Reaſon, that muſt needs be the Rule of their Actions, and not the Commands of the Magiſtrate; and conſequently the Magiſtrate can have no more Right to uſe Force on a Subject, than a Subject has on him: for tho he is his Subject in other Matters, yet in thoſe meerly Religious, he is equally a Soveraign, equally Independant as the Magiſtrate himſelf; becauſe where there is no other Judg on Earth but every one's own Reaſon, every Man (one as well as another) is a Supream Judg: Nay, this Sovereign Right of judging every one for himſelf is ſo inherent, that none can make

this Power over to another. So that it's impoſſible that the Magiſtrate upon any Preſence whatever, can claim a Magiſterial Power in theſe Matters, but only a Right to adviſe, which belongs to every one as well as to him. And,

3. The Difference between *Advice* and *Command* conſiſts in this, that Advice one is oblig'd to follow, not for the ſake of the *Perſon* that gives it, but for the good that is contained in it, which he, *to whom* and for whoſe ſake it is given, is to judg of; and conſequently if he does not think it good, is not obliged to follow it. It's ridiculous as well as unjuſt to uſe Force in Matters of Advice, and by Civil Sanctions oblige People to follow it. Whoever does this, does in effect (however he may deny it in Words) claim a Legiſlative Power. But where there is ſuch a Power, one is oblig'd to obey upon the account, and for the ſake of the Authority that commands it: And if the Magiſtrate had ſuch a Power, Men would be obliged to profeſs whatever Religion he commands them.

4. The Reaſon why a Judg is neceſſary in Civil and not in *Religious* Controverſies, is, becauſe in Civil Matters it is impoſſible that *Titius* ſhould enjoy the things in Controverſy, and *Sempronius* too; therefore the *Plaintiff* muſt injure the *Defendant* by diſquieting his Poſſeſſion, or the Defendant wrong the Plaintiff by

by keeping his Right from him, ſo that there is a neceſſity of a common Judg between them, who would be to no purpoſe if both Parties were not obliged to acquieſce in his Sentence, I mean, with an external Obedience, ſo as to ſuffer it to be put in execution; but not with an Internal, ſo as to believe it always juſt.

But in Religious Controverſies the Caſe is otherwiſe, for there each may hold his Opinion, and do the other no wrong nor himſelf neither, if he did his beſt in judging concerning his Opinion, ſo that there can be no occaſion of a Judg: And it's further conſiderable that here can be none but what is a Party, as being before engaged either for or againſt the Opinion that is to be decided: But for a Party to judg it againſt all natural Equity, tho it's the conſtant practice of the Clergy to make profeſt and highly intereſſed Parties, whoſe Preferments are held by declaring for ſuch Opinions, to be both Accuſers and Judges; that is, to declare themſelves *Orthodox*, and therefore to engroſs all Preferments, and their Opponents *Heterodox*, and conſequently not to ſhare with them. But if there is a Judg to whoſe Determination one is obliged to ſubmit, he that is ſo obliged muſt give an Internal Conſent, becauſe here all *External* Compliance contrary to one's Judgment is a *Sin*; but all the Power in the World

is not able to make a Man give an Internal Conſent, becauſe it's not in his own, much leſs in another's Power to make him *believe* or *think* as he pleaſeth: Yet were that poſſible, no Man is qualified to be a Judg but he that is *infallible*; beſides, were there any ſuch Judg, yet a Man was not to be ruled by him, except he was convinced he was ſo, But,

5. There being no ſuch Judg on Earth, there is an abſolute neceſſity of leaving thoſe Controverſies to be decided by *God* himſelf, as being Matters wholly relating to him, and conſequently wholly to be left to him. Therefore for the Magiſtrate to puniſh any for acting according to their Judgments, is not only invading the *Rights* of his Fellow-men, but the *Prerogative of God himſelf*, in taking upon him to judg thoſe Matters *God* has reſerv'd for his own *Tribunal*. Nay, he goes further than this, and puniſheth Men for obeying God rather than himſelf. God requires Man to worſhip him as he in his Conſcience thinks *moſt agreeable to his Will*; and the Magiſtrate threatneth him if he does ſo, to Fine, Impriſon, and Ruin him, which is ſetting himſelf *above God*; a Crime greater than that of *Lucifer*, who only attempted an Equality with his Maker, not a *Superiority above him*.

6. It's ſaid, the Magiſtrate has a Right to hinder his Subjects from following their Conſciences when erroneous. Which is very abſurd;

ſurd; for if a Man was not oblig'd to act according to his Conſcience for fear of its being erroneous, no Man would be obliged to act according to his Conſcience at all, ſince the miſtaken Perſon thinks himſelf as much in the right, nay is generally more confident than he that is really ſo: So that if *one* muſt follow his Conſcience, there's the ſame neceſſity for *all*, becauſe all equally judg themſelves in the Right. But if the Magiſtrate is to judg whoſe Conſcience is erroneous, then Men muſt deſert their Conſciences, and all the World over profeſs the ſame Principles with the Magiſtrates they live under. For Civil Government is every where the ſame, and one Magiſtrate as well as another has an equal right to judg who of his Subjects have erroneous Conſciences.

7. If it be Mens indiſpenſible Duty to *worſhip God* according to *Conſcience*, and that publickly too, (for the more publick the Worſhip is, the more it tends to the Glory of God) it muſt be their Duty to uſe the Means that are neceſſary to that End; and conſequently, if it be neceſſary, oppoſe Force to Force: for the Magiſtrate in things beyond his Commiſſion, is but a private Perſon; and People do no Injuſtice in defending that Right none can have a right to deprive them of, and which themſelves cannot part with; it being the Eſſential Right of Human Nature, to *worſhip* God

according to *Conviction*, which is antecedent to all Government, and can never be ſubject to it. But,

8. If the Magiſtrate has a Right to uſe Force in Matters of meer Religion, he muſt have this Right by *God's poſitive Law*, or by the *Law of Nature*.

But that he has no ſuch Power by *God's poſitive Law*, is evident from this one Conſideration, that all Mankind (except the *Jews* whoſe Laws were not obligatory to other Nations) were under no Law but that of Nature, until the coming of Chriſt: But Chriſt, whoſe *Kingdom is not of this World*, and who diſclaimed all Civil Power, made no Change or Alteration in the Civil Rights and Conditions of Mankind, which he muſt have done had he made Mens Properties depend upon their thinking or acting in Matters purely Religious according to the Magiſtrate's Judgment.

As Chriſt and the Magiſtrate have each their diſtinct *Kingdoms*, ſo they muſt have each their *Limits* and *Bounds*; the Magiſtrate's Kingdom (it's true) muſt be ſubſervient to *Chriſt*'s in puniſhing *Vice* and *Immorality*, and in preſerving People from being moleſted in their Civil Rights for worſhipping God according to Conſcience; and here he ſtill keeps within the Confines of his own Kingdom: but if he exerciſeth a Legiſlature in Chriſt's, and makes

makes uſe of Violence to put his Laws in execution, he aſſumes a greater Power than *Chriſt* himſelf claims. But,

9. If the Magiſtrate claims ſuch a Right by the Law of Nature, that Right ought fully to be made appear, becauſe there is no part of that Law but what is moſt clear and evident.

To prove he has ſuch a Power, it's uſually urged, that if *Parents* by the Law of Nature have a right to uſe Force on their *Children* in Matters of meer Religion; the Magiſtrate, whoſe Power over his *Subjects* is much greater than that of *Parents* over their *Children*, has at leaſt as great a Right.

I anſwer; It's a Duty in *Parents*, for the Good of their *Children*, (for which they are fitted by their natural Love and Tenderneſs) to *ſupply the Defects* of their Underſtanding, until they are capable of underſtanding for themſelves. Before which time Parents no doubt will inſtruct them in their own Religion, whether *Paganiſm*, *Judaiſm*, or *Mahometiſm*; yet no Man will ſuppoſe that they can juſtly uſe Force on them when they come to Years of Diſcretion, to make them embrace thoſe Religions or any other. And yet the Caſe between the Magiſtrate and his Subjects, is very different from that of Parents and Children in their Nonage; becauſe the Magiſtrate is not in thoſe Matters to ſupply the

the Defects of his Subjects Underſtanding for a time, but his Power reaches to Men of all Ages and Capacities: ſo that it's evident that the Reaſon that ſubjects Children in their Nonage to the uſe of Force, does not all concern Men at Years of Diſcretion.

10. It's granted by all, that a *Heathen* Magiſtrate has no right to judg in Matters ſimply Religious; how then comes a *Chriſtian* by the Law of Nature to obtain this *Charter*, ſince that Law allows one Magiſtrate no more Power than another? and what is done by a competent Authority, tho not right, yet is valid, *ratum ſi non rectum*. And as Civil Power is every where the ſame, ſo let me add *Church-Power* is ſo too; ſo that the *Church* cannot give any new Power to the Magiſtrate by his becoming a Member of it, nor the Magiſtrate any new Power to the Church by his coming into it.

11. It's ſaid, the Law of Nature obligeth every one in his Station to promote the true Religion; and for that reaſon the Magiſtrate is obliged to exerciſe a Coercive Power in Matters meerly Religious.

The Magiſtrate no doubt is to make uſe of his Power in things that belong to his Station, but meerly religious Ones, as it has been already proved, do not; as to thoſe he is no more than a private Perſon, nay, the Clergy cannot own him for more, without deſtroying

ſtroying their own Supremacy in Matters Spiritual, which includes meerly religious Ones, except there can be more than one Supream in the ſame thing.

CHAP. III.

That a Power in the Magiſtrate to uſe Force in Matters of meer Religion, tends to Mens Eternal Ruin.

1. BUT if the Magiſtrate has any ſuch Power from the Law of Nature, it muſt be becauſe it tends to promote, either the Eternal or Temporal Good of Mankind, or the Honour of God: But to take away the leaſt Colour of any Right upon theſe Pretences, I ſhall ſhow, firſt, the Exerciſe of ſuch a Power is deſtructive of Man's Eternal Happineſs. *2dly.* Of his Temporal, and contrary to all thoſe Laws that for our mutual good God requires of us. *3dly.* That it is directly oppoſite to, and inconſiſtent with the Honour of God.

2. As to the firſt; It is of fatal Conſequence to the *Eternal Happineſs of Mankind*, in having a direct tendency to make them act *contrary to their Conſciences*. For ſince Force can no more work a Change or Alteration on the *Mind*,

Mind, than Arguments can on *Matter*, all that it can do, is to make Men unwilling to lie under the weight of it; which they have no way of avoiding, but by acting as the Magiſtrate will have them; the Truth of which Force is wholly unapt to convince them of, and can only produce an outward compliance, the Conſcience ſtill remaining averſe: For nothing is more evident, than that where a thing is wholly impertinent to convince the Conſcience, (as Violence is) and yet it obligeth a Man to act, it obligeth him to act contrary to his Conſcience; which is directly contrary to his Eternal Happineſs: For if he that acts *when he doubts is damned*, he cannot certainly be in a better Condition, who wholly revolts from his Conſcience, and baſely lieth both to *God and Man*.

3. The true Religion it ſelf can neither judg nor puniſh; but the Magiſtrate by the True Religion means his *own*; and ſince all Magiſtrates think themſelves in the right, they (if Force is to be uſed) muſt think themſelves oblig'd to uſe it: And conſequently if one uſeth Force to make People *profeſs a True Doctrine or Religion*, there are at leaſt five hundred who would uſe it to make People, contrary to their Conſciences, profeſs a Falſe Religion, either in whole or part, than which there can be nothing more impious; nor would the Matter be much mended, if the Magiſtrate

ſtrate forceth Men to profeſs the True Religion, which yet is certainly falſe to them whilſt they believe it ſo. And the forcing People to profeſs either a true or falſe Religion, is equally prejudicial to the Common-Wealth, and conſequently upon that account equally ſinful; becauſe when Men, by acting againſt their Conſciences, are brought to have no regard to them, they will not ſcruple to break thoſe moral Duties which all Religions teach, and in the obſerving of which Man's mutual Happineſs conſiſts: therefore the Magiſtrate is ſo far from having a right to puniſh Men for acting according to their Conſciences, that it's his Duty to ſee they do not violate them, tho ſuppoſed never ſo erroneous; and conſequently all Force is religiouſly to be abſtain'd from; which, as Mr. *Chillingworth* (Chap. 5. n. 96.) obſerveth, may make Men counterfeit, but cannot make them believe; and therefore is fit to breed Form without, and Atheiſm within: Yet this is not the only fatal Conſequence of this Doctrine, but as I ſhall ſhow in my next,

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Compulſion is inconſiſtent with all thoſe Duties that God, for the ſake of Mens Temporal Happineſs, requires of one towards another.

1. NOthing can be more diametrically oppoſite to all thoſe Precepts of *Love, Charity, Kindneſs, Gentleneſs, Meekneſs, Patience, Forbearance,* the Goſpel is in a manner compoſed of, than Mens ill uſing one another for different Sentiments in things meerly Religious. To pretend Love, Kindneſs, Friendſhip, *&c.* and yet vex, oppreſs, and ruin, is no better than mocking and ſporting with the Miſeries of thoſe we have ſo treated. Firſt to kiſs and then betray, is the baſeſt Hypocriſy, if that can paſs for Hypocriſy which openly proclaims at how great a diſtance Mens Words and Actions are. The kindeſt Office one Man can do to another is, if he thinks him in an Error, to endeavour to convince him of it; who tho he continues in his former Opinion, yet the Obligation to the other for his good Intention ſtill remains, and this Benefit he may obtain by it, that by examining

ing the Reasons on both Sides, he is more likely to discover the Truth; yet should he mistake after he has impartially examined the Point, his Error would be wholly innocent, since he has done what he can to find out the Truth, and God requires no more; but to cause a Person to be persecuted for being instrumental in this, is the most unnatural and diabolical thing that can be.

2. *Object.* It's usually said, 'tis not want of Charity, but the greatest that can be to hinder Men by Force from professing such Opinions as are destructive to their Souls.

Answ. But I say, *first*, that it's against Charity for the Magistrate to do a real Ill to his Subjects, when by it he (who is as fallible as those he persecutes) is as likely to promote Error as Truth; because if the Error ballanceth the Truth, it's doing Mischief for Mischief's sake: now since Truth is but one, and Falshood almost infinite, there's a prodigious odds; he persecutes his Subjects to establish Error.

2*dly*. I answer, That Opinions meerly as such, are not destructive of Mens Souls; for God who has made Man liable to mistake, does not require an Impossibility of him, never to be mistaken, but that he impartially searches after religious Truth, and sincerely endeavours to discover it by those Helps and Abilities he has bestowed on him to that purpose:

poſe: He therefore that does this, has the ſatisfaction of doing his Duty as a rational Creature, and may be ſure, tho he miſſeth Truth, he ſhall not miſs the Reward of it, ſince he has followed, as well as he could, (and no more could be his Duty) the only Guide God has given him to judg of Truth and Falſhood. And if it be no Fault in a Judg that condemns an innocent Perſon, if upon ſufficient Evidence he appears guilty; the ſame Reaſon will hold as ſtrong for the Innocence of an Opinion, that a Man after he has impartially conſidered embraceth for Truth, and by which he prejudiceth no Perſon. And if he that has loſt his Senſes, if it be not by his own Fault, is not accountable for what he does; there is as little reaſon that he ſhould, who acts according to the beſt of his Underſtanding; for it's the Sincerity of the Heart, and the Goodneſs of the Intention that God wholly regards: And the ignorant and miſtaken (if it be not their own Fault) are as acceptable to him as the knowing and not miſtaken; ſince it's he that cauſes the Differences of Mens Underſtandings, as well as Circumſtances, (which laſt makes the Widow's Mite, tho very inconſiderable in it ſelf) as acceptable as the great Preſents of the Rich. So that two Men that are of different Religions, may be both in the right Way to Heaven, provided they do their endeavour to find

find out the Truth. For it's inconſiſtent with Juſtice to give a *Being* to any Creature that muſt neceſſarily make it more miſerable than *not to be*; which muſt be, if Men are to be puniſhed eternally for unavoidable Miſtakes: But God who could have no other Deſign in creating our immortal Minds, than that they ſhould be happy, conſequently has given them all (ſince they are all equally from him) ſufficient Means to make themſelves ſo; ſo that it's ſtrangely abſurd, as well as injurious to an infinitely perfect Being, to ſuppoſe he is a reſpecter of Perſons, or that he has made Mens Eternal Happineſs or Miſery to depend on ſuch Accidents, as being born in *England*, *Rome*, *Turky*, *China*, &c.

Promulgation is certainly eſſential to a Law; and therefore thoſe that have no opportunity of being convinced of the Truth of the Goſpel, ſhall not be accountable for not believing it, but ſhall be judged by the Law they know, and not by that they did not know; nor ſhall thoſe that do believe the Goſpel, if after a diligent ſearch they are miſtaken in ſome Points of it, be condemn'd for it, becauſe thoſe Points cannot be ſaid to be ſufficiently promulgated to them. To doubt of this, is to queſtion the Juſtice of God; therefore I may ſafely conclude, that whoever does what God requires from him ſhall be rewarded; and that God requires no more from every one, but that he

ſhall uſe his honeſt Endeavour by all means, to know and underſtand his Will as perfectly as he can, provided when known he does his beſt Endeavours to live up to it; and conſequently the greateſt Charity the Magiſtrate is capable of doing, is not to prejudice Men in their grand Choice by Puniſhments or Rewards, but to leave them entirely at Liberty as the moſt likely way to find out the Truth; or if they miſs it, to make their Miſtakes wholly innocent. But of that more hereafter.

3. All the Uncharitableneſs, Animoſities, Envy and Hatred that reigns amongſt diſſenting Parties, are owing to Perſecution, and not to the bare Differences of Opinions, which of themſelves are no more apt to produce theſe Effects, than different Complexions or Palats; for to ſee a Man in an Error, is apt to create Pity in us, a Paſſion very oppoſite to Hatred: Nor would there be the leaſt Grounds for Uncharitableneſs, if no Man was to be haraſſed in his Name, Goods, or Perſon, for any ſpeculative Opinion or outward way of Worſhip; but to uſe one ill upon that account, ſets him at perfect Enmity, and creates a Quarrel.

The Heathens, who had more and wider Differences about Matters of Religion than the Chriſtians, yet becauſe they tolerated one another, had not thoſe irreconcilable Animoſities,

moſities, fierce Contentions and unnatural Wars, which have frequently happened ſince the Propagation of the Chriſtian Religion; which yet without Impiety cannot be imputed to its Genius, which is pure, peaceable, and inoffenſive, and requires a univerſal Love and Charity for all Men of what Profeſſion ſoever. No, it's the Antichriſtian Doctrine of Perſecution that has transformed the mild and ſociable Nature of Man into greater Ferocity than that of Wolves and Tigers: for nothing (it's certain) can more exaſperate the Minds of Men, than to be ill uſed for following the Dictates of their Conſciences; for then every one of them, ſince they all ſuffer upon the ſame Account, will be apt to reſent, not only what is done to himſelf, but to the reſt of his Sect, who cannot but think their Perſecutors their mortal Enemies, ſince they not only uſe them ill without any manner of Provocation, but (as they cannot but ſuppoſe) endeavour to force them to ruin themſelves eternally; and they, if ever they get their Perſecutors in their Power, will in all likelihood double or treble on them what themſelves ſuffered: So by degrees Men arrive to the height of Fury, Rage and Madneſs, and break thrô not only all the Ties of Chriſtianity, but even Humanity; tho whilſt they thus furniſh ſuch powerful Provocations to endleſs Diſcords, Hatreds, Factions, Wars,

Maſſacres, *&c.* they have nothing in their Mouths but the Good of the Church and Salvation of Souls, not conſidering that without Love they cannot be Chriſt's Diſciples, (*John* 13.) and that all other Duties without Charity profit nothing. But what is more oppoſite to theſe, than to tempt Men to make themſelves miſerable *hereafter*, to avoid being ſo *here?* For either they muſt continue all their Lives under Perſecution, (which who can ſupport?) or elſe they muſt buy their temporal Quiet with the loſs of their Eternal Happineſs. But,

4. This Doctrine of Compulſion is not only inconſiſtent with Love, Meekneſs, and ſuch-like, but directly contrary to the very Foundation of natural Equity and Juſtice, in cauſing Men to do as they would not be done unto; for they that are (when they have the Civil Power on their ſide) for judging for others, and puniſhing them for not acting according to their Judgments, are unwilling that others, when the Scales of Authority are turned, ſhould judg for them in like manner. Tho then there's nothing they can plead for themſelves, but what before they condemned in others; and it would be as ridiculous to requeſt thoſe that they before ill uſed, to have regard to the common Rules of Juſtice, as it would have been in thoſe Scythians who ſacrificed all Strangers to their Gods, to deſire

ſire others to have reſpect to the Laws of Hoſpitality.

5. It may be objected, That the Rule of doing as you would be done unto does not hold, becauſe one Magiſtrate is in the Right, and the other not; and conſequently he that is in the Right himſelf, has a Right to judg, but not *vice verſa*.

Anſw. But ſince the Diſpute is who is in the Right, it's ridiculous to ſay, he that's only in the Right has a Power to judg, except there were ſome Superiour to determine which of them is in the Right; but there being no ſuch Superiour, every Magiſtrate is to judg for himſelf, who to be ſure will judg himſelf in the Right, and conſequently thoſe that differ from him in the Wrong: And there can be no reaſon why one Magiſtrate as well as another has not a Right to judg, ſince that Right is founded in being a Magiſtrate, which is common to them all: And there can be no Reaſon for the Orthodox puniſhing Schiſmaticks, Hereticks, Mahometans, Jews, Pagans, *&c.* but what will equally oblige them, as long as they believe themſelves to be Orthodox, to puniſh thoſe that really are ſo. Therefore the Defenders of any Perſecution are guilty of encouraging and abetting all Perſecution whatſoever, even that under which themſelves ſuffer, ſince they can frame no Arguments to juſtify the uſing Force to promote the true Reli-

gion, but what will equally ſerve in behalf of any Religion that's believed to be true: As we find the looſe Harangues of *Auſtin* upon that Subject are urged by the Patrons of Perſecution, of what Sect or Denomination ſoever. And ſince there can be no Argument to proſecute Error, but what will be turned upon Truth it ſelf, let the Perſecutors themſelves judg whether it's not better to leave all ſuch diſputable Points to the only juſt Judg, than to take them into their own Hands; who, were they wholly ignorant in what part of the World their Station was to be, would be glad there was no ſuch thing as Perſecution, rather than run the riſque of being perſecuted themſelves, which ſhows that even they look on it in general as an ill thing; and it's better certainly that a particular Inconvenience (ſuppoſing Toleration to be ſuch) ſhould be permitted, than ſuch a Univerſal Miſchief as Perſecution is, ſhould prevail.

It's ſaid, do as you would be done unto, is not properly a Law to warrant the thing we are about, but only a Rule to direct us what Meaſures we ought to obſerve in our acting with others, when the thing it ſelf is lawful. Which granting to be true, yet for a Man to judg which is the true Religion, and act according to that Judgment, all agree is not only lawful, but a Duty, becauſe all agree themſelves are obliged to act ſo; and there-

fore

fore if I deſire this Liberty for my ſelf, I ought not to deny it to my Brother, ſeeing he is a Man, and I am no more, and therefore no more infallible than he, and for that reaſon can have no more Right to perſecute him into my Opinion, than he has to force me into his; for between Equals there ought to be an equal Meaſure: Now by Nature all Men are equal, and have an equal and natural Right of ſerving God as they think beſt; and no accidental Difference as to other Matters, can deprive them of this Right. In a word, there can be no reaſon to deny the Obligation of this Rule in this Caſe, but what will equally deſtroy it in any other. But,

6. Perſecution deſtroys not only natural Equity and Juſtice, but breaks all the Ties of Kindred, Blood, Gratitude, Merit; becauſe, let a Man be never ſo nearly related to one of perſecuting Principles, or have done him all the important Kindneſſes imaginable, or have never ſo much Merit, be never ſo uſeful to the Publick, or be never ſo exemplary in his Life and Converſation, that will but the ſooner expoſe him to ſuffer, not only becauſe People are apt to be influenced by ſuch a one, but becauſe according to the Perſecutor's Principles he is obliged to haraſs him ſooner than another, out of pure love to him, it being the kindeſt thing he is capable of doing him: So that without a Figure it may juſtly be ſaid

of all Perſecutors, that their very Mercies and Kindneſſes are Cruelties. But,

7. This is not all, this Doctrine of Compulſion annuls all Obligations of the moſt Sacred Oaths; for if the Magiſtrate is obliged by God to uſe Force on his diſſenting Subjects, no Promiſes to indemnify them, tho ſworn to with the moſt ſolemn Oaths, ought to be kept, becauſe all ſuch Oaths are void from the beginning, the Magiſtrate being under a prior Obligation to God (which is not in his Power to diſpenſe with) to puniſh them; which muſt make all Quarrels between the Magiſtrate and his diſſenting Subjects immortal, ſince there can be no Security given that they ſhall not be puniſhed for their Religion when-ever it is in the Magiſtrate's Power: and by the ſame Reaſon, all Articles and Covenants that Towns or Countries make for Liberty of Conſcience, upon their ſubmitting themſelves, are null and void; and ſo are all the Promiſes which Popiſh Kings have made to their Proteſtant Subjects, becauſe they are obliged to puniſh Hereticks, (which they ſuppoſe Proteſtants to be) and conſequently cannot but think their Oaths unlawful. And all our late Laws for Liberty of Conſcience are in themſelves void, becauſe he that has the Power of the Sword, is required by God's Laws (which no Human Ones can ſuperſede) to puniſh Diſſenters from the

true

true Church: And if all theſe Obligations are void in themſelves, what Reaſon is there that thoſe between Sovereign and Sovereign ſhould be more firm, when either of them judg the breaking them will tend to advance the Honour of God, ſince, as they cannot pretend to have ſo great a tenderneſs for the Right of Foreigners, as of their own Subjects, ſo they cannot but know that God is equally diſhonoured by falſe Religions in one Place as in another? And it's but a poor Zeal for his Honour, that looks no farther than ſuch a Lake, River, or Mountain, the uſual Boundaries of Kingdoms; which would be the way to ſet all Mankind together by the Ears. But,

8. Suppoſe it ſhould not always have that Effect, yet it muſt neceſſarily deſtroy all Trade and Commerce between Nations of different Perſwaſions; for who would venture into a Foreign Nation, except he were of the ſame Perſwaſion with them, if they were equally obliged to puniſh Men for falſe Religions or Doctrines, as well as for Theft and Murder, *&c?* which muſt neceſſarily diſcourage all Commerce, and make Nations moſt inhoſpitable and barbarous: And if Perſecutors do not follow this Method, it's becauſe they do not act according to their own Principles,

9. Which root out all Mercy, and take from the Magiſtrate all Power of pardoning any Crime whatever, and from all private Perſons

Perſons the forgiving their Enemies: For if the Magiſtrate is not to act as the Repreſentative of the Civil Society only, but alſo to puniſh Offences againſt God, meerly as ſuch, tho he may forgive any Crime againſt himſelf, or pardon the breach of his own Laws; yet theſe being alſo Sins againſt God, he is obliged upon God's Account to puniſh Men for the Breach of them, as well as for Infidelity or Hereſy: And all private Perſons, tho they muſt forgive their Brethren, not only ſeven, but ſeven times ſeven, yet the not puniſhing them by this Doctrine is wholly put out of their Power, becauſe it obliges them to ſhew their Zeal for God's Honour, in getting the Magiſtrate to puniſh them, who by injuring their Brethren, offend againſt God.

10. In a word, this Doctrine of Force is directly contrary to the main Deſign of all God's Laws, wherein Men are concerned one with another, which is their mutual Good: As for Inſtance; The forbidding Murder is intended for the Security of Mens greateſt Good, their Lives; which would be ſtrangely defeated, if the Supream Powers were to puniſh with Death thoſe they judg do diſhonour God with their falſe Worſhip, becauſe it would not fail to fill the World with Blood and Slaughter, ſince the Governours of it are as oppoſite in their Judgments about theſe Matters, as in the Fable the Man's two Wives were,

were, where his old one pluckt out his black Hairs, and his young Wife his gray Ones.

But ſuppoſe the Supream Powers were not oblig'd to deprive People of their Lives, but only of their Properties, (not to mention that even that would deſtroy great Numbers by robbing them of the Neceſſaries of Life) the end of all thoſe Laws which forbid all kinds of Injuries, and require mutual Aſſiſtance one towards another for their common good, would be in a manner deſtroyed, ſince a great part of Mankind muſt be unavoidably miſerable, by being either at once, or by degrees, deprived of the means of ſubſiſting happily, and the reſt would hold what they poſſeſs but by a precarious Tenure, ſince it would depend on their Governours, (tho they had never ſo many ſucceſſively) or their own not changing their Opinions, (neither of which is in their Power to hinder) whether they ſhould enjoy any thing or not. Therefore it ſhews the greateſt Indiſcretion in thoſe (who tho they have a ſhare in the Legiſlature, yet are ſubject to the Laws themſelves) to conſent to any perſecuting Ones, becauſe they cannot be ſure but that they are contriving Rods for their own Backs, or for their Childrens or near Relations: and I believe there are few Perſecutors (for all their Zeal) but would rather Speculative Points were wholly left to the merciful and wiſe

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Judgment of God, than to have their own Families or Friends ruin'd about them. But to return; In vain are the Magiſtrates required not to tyrannize over and oppreſs their Subjects, if they are to puniſh them for not being of the ſame Perſwaſion with them. It had been much happier for Men in relation to their Temporal, as well as Eternal Condition, to be in a State of Nature, than to let Tyrants deprive them of the Comforts of this Life, for no other Reaſon than not daring to act contrary to their Conſciences in things not relating to this Life: And People, where they oppreſs one the other, when the Good of the Society cannot be pretended, may juſtly be reckoned in a worſe State than that of Nature, *viz.* of War, which is never at an end as long as there are Men who cannot comply with all thoſe things, that out of Ignorance, Superſtition, Ambition, *&c.* are eſtabliſhed as neceſſary to Church-Communion.

11. In a word; Can Men oppreſs, ruin and kill for God's ſake, and deſtroy all moral Honeſty on pretence of Religion? which when it ſerves to no other end than to enflame the Tempers of Men, and ſet a keener Edg on their Spirits, and to make them ten times more the Children of Wrath and Cruelty than they are by Nature, does ſurely loſe its Nature, and ceaſes to be Religion; for let Men ſay worſe of Infidelity and Atheiſm if they can.

But,

But if, on the contrary, the ruining thoſe that do nothing againſt the Welfare of the Society, becomes an *Act* of Piety, when it's made uſe of to extirpate a falſe Religion or Opinion, there are no Crimes whatever but by the ſame reaſon will become religious and vertuous Actions, if they are equally ſerviceable to the ſame pious End; *ſcelera ipſa neſaſq; hâc mercede placent:* and conſequently it would be an Act of Piety and Vertue to make uſe of pious Frauds to calumniate, to lie, to bear falſe Witneſs, to murder, to aſſaſſinate even the Magiſtrate himſelf.

12. Thus, whereas Religion has no other Deſign than the Advancement of Man's Happineſs, and God's Glory; this perſecuting Humour is ſo far from being ſerviceable to the former, that it's plainly deſtructive of it: for whereas in order to that good End, the Scripture has directed all Stations and Relations of Men ſo to act, as may beſt tend to Love and Peace, (the true Baſis of the Happineſs of the Society) this drives them all to contrary Motions; for Magiſtrates are incited to ruin thoſe for whoſe Good they were inſtituted.

Subjects are tempted to diſobey their Governours, and retaliate Perſecution ſo much the more fiercely, by how much greater Influence their Opinions and Actions have upon the Community.

Nor

Nor does it only deſtroy the Peace of a Nation within its own Bowels, but it engageth one Nation againſt another. And,

13. As it deſtroys all theſe Publick Obligations, by the ſame reaſon all private Ones (which are not ſo great as thoſe owing to the Publick) muſt ceaſe; ſo that it embroileth private Families, ſubverts the mutual Duties between Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants, *&c.* ſeducing them into a belief, that the way to be ſerviceable to one another's Eternal Intereſt, is by being cruel to their Temporal; and conſequently the more Charity they owe one another, the ſooner they are to uſe one another ill. Nor can there be any reaſon why the doing this of themſelves is not as effectual to promote each others Eternal Happineſs, as the doing the very ſame at the command of the Magiſtrate, (who is every whit as fallible as they) or why they need more to expect a Command to uſe Force, than to give Advice, if one as well as the other has a tendency to promote (which is every ones Duty) the Good of Souls, and the Honour of God.

Now tho Perſecution tends no leſs to the Diſhonour of God, than the Unhappineſs of Man; yet becauſe hitherto we ſee God's Honour no otherwiſe concerned than indirectly and by conſequence, I ſhall therefore ſhow in my next,

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

That the Doctrine of Compulſion is directly contrary to the Honour of God.

1. THE only way that Men can render immediate Honour to God, is by worſhipping him according to that Method they think moſt agreeable to his Will: If therefore the Magiſtrate puniſheth them for ſo doing, he ſetteth himſelf in direct oppoſition to the Honour of God: For then he muſt by Force endeavour to hinder them, either from worſhipping God at all, which is the way to make them down-right Irreligious, or elſe force them to worſhip him in a way they believe he has forbid; which is adding to the neglect of worſhipping him as they ought, down-right Affronts, and under pretence of appeaſing his Anger, (which is the Deſign of their ſolemn Devotion) provoking him by a notorious Diſſimulation and a mock-Worſhip. Therefore without ſetting himſelf againſt God, he cannot deny them the entire liberty of worſhipping him as they think beſt, and that publickly too; for the more publick the Worſhip is, the more it tends to his Honour. To acknowledg that Men in private ought

ought to worſhip God according to their Conſciences, and to deny it's their Duty to do ſo in Publick, is very abſurd; or if it be their Duty, to pretend to have a Right from God to hinder them from doing their Duty, is more abſurd.

In ſhort, what can ſhew a greater Defiance of the Almighty, and reliſh more of the Spirit of the Devil, than to perſecute Men for expreſſing their Love and Zeal for the Honour of God, which they can no otherwiſe do, than by worſhipping him according to their Conſciences? And God will reſent as done to himſelf, what-ever is done to a Child of his upon that account. And Perſecutors do not come much behind that Italian in Impiety, who made his Enemy blaſpheme God, and then ſtab'd him, when they make innocent Perſons who are no ways their Enemies, or have not done them the leaſt Injury, not only once, but for all their Lives, guilty of a moſt deteſtable Apoſtacy, in revolting from their Conſciences, and inſtead of honouring, offer God nothing but Indignities and Affronts, and ready to commit (the Ties of Conſcience once broken) all manner of Impieties and Villanies.

2. Men can no otherwiſe honour God, than by entertaining ſuch Conceptions of him, as tend to make them love, reverence, and fear him. Now the more any Nation doth this, the

the more by it they honour him; and ſince what gives one a higher Idea of God and his Perfections, may have a different Effect upon another, Men may have different Ideas, and yet equally honour God. Therefore it's very unjuſt in the different Sects to condemn each the other for diſhonouring God, when each Party prefer their own Opinions, becauſe they create in them the greater Eſteem, Reverence and Honour for God; and the Oppoſite they apprehend, in reſpect of their own, as injurious and diſhonourable to him. Therefore to puniſh Men for honouring God according to their own Ideas, or to think they can honour him any otherwiſe, is very abſurd.

3. Beſides, this Doctrine of Compulſion reflects highly on the Honour of God, in making him act inconſiſtently, by obliging Men to judg for themſelves, and honour God according to the beſt of their Judgments; and at the ſame time requiring the Magiſtrate to judg for them, and to make them act according to his, and not their own Judgments.

What I pray can be more injurious to the Juſtice as well as Goodneſs of God, than to ſuppoſe he has expoſed the truly Religious and Conſcientious to be every-where ill uſed, whilſt Men of no Religion will be ſure to eſcape by outwardly complying with that of the Magiſtrate's? ſo that none but the Conſcientious, and they too for being ſuch, are

ſubject to perpetual Miſery. Such an impious Doctrine is ſo far from having a Divine Original, that it could owe its Riſe to no other than the grand Enemy of Mankind, it being his Contrivance to tempt Men to diſhonour God by their Hypocriſy, or elſe gratify his Malice on thoſe that refuſe. But,

4. It's farther diſhonourable to God, in making the two grand Commands, The Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind, (which comprehend all Religion) to claſh one with the other: Becauſe the Magiſtrate cannot promote the Honour of God by uſing Force on all he judges to have wrong Notions in Matters of meer Religion, without acting (as has been already proved) contrary to the Good of Mankind. But God's Laws are ſo far from being inconſiſtent, that there's ſo perfect an Agreement and Connection between them, that the breaking one is the breaking all: Nay, the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, do ſo evidently imply or include each other, that they are in effect the ſame. For as our loving God is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to our well-being, that without it we ſhould be the moſt miſerable of all Creatures; ſo our loving our Neighbour (which includes all thoſe Duties we owe one another) is neceſſary to our loving God: *For if a Man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar: For he that loveth not his Brother whom he has ſeen,*

ſeen, how can he love God whom he has not ſeen? 1 *John* 4. 20. And it's impoſſible we ſhould honour God more, than by making our Love as extenſive as all Mankind; becauſe by it we imitate him whoſe tender Mercies are over all his Works, and who deſigns that all Men, what-ever their Opinions are, ſhould live in Love and Peace, (Rom. 12. 18. *As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men*) it being the only way to promote our mutual Happineſs, which is the reaſon we are requir'd to believe in, and honour God. For he who is infinitely happy in himſelf, and conſequently incapable of receiving any Satisfaction or Diſſatisfaction from his Creatures, could have no Motive in requiring any thing from us, but as it naturally tends to promote our general Good; and therefore we can do nothing more agreeable to his Will, than to uſe one another as it requires: Nay, ſo infinitely great is the Love of God, that leſt we ſhould fail to be happy here, he has made our temporal Good (which can only be procured by obſerving thoſe Rules he has preſcribed us) the Means to obtain our Eternal. Hence it is that Love, which *worketh no ill to his Neighbour*, is the fulfilling of the Law; and Charity is preferred before all Vertues, even Faith it ſelf, which (*Jam.* 2. 20.) *without good Works is dead*, and is no better than the Faith of Devils. But the Faith of a Perſecutor is not only without

good Works, but the greateſt Incendiary that can be to ill Ones, ſince nothing can qualify a Man to do ſo much Miſchief, as believing he does God Service therein; therefore his Belief is worſe than Atheiſm, or no Faith at all. That Faith that muſt ſave us, is that which works by Love; but his Faith deſtroys his Love. The Apoſtle *James* (Chap. 1. v. 27.) tells us, *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction.* But his Religion is to bring Affliction to Fatherleſs, and Widows, and every one elſe that has a different Perſwaſion from himſelf.

In a word; If it were ſo great a Crime in the Jews, that it could not be forgiven in this World nor the next, to impute the Miracles our Saviour did, when he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed with the Devil, not to the Holy Spirit, but to that of *Beelzebub*; Can it be much leſs to impute to the Holy Ghoſt a Doctrine which deſtroys the End and Intent of all natural as well as revealed Religion, and can ſerve to no other End, than to diſhonour God, deſtroy Conſcience, and confound Mankind? By what has been ſaid, I think it's plain that nothing can be more provoking to the Supream Protector of Mankind, than to pervert the Knowledg he has given us of himſelf for the Good of his Creatures, to their ruin, and make the

Honour

Honour of God a Pretence for deſtroying the Welfare of Human Societies. Beſides,

5. What can be more abſurd, than that in judging of theſe *matters* wherein we differ from Brutes, we ſhould be ſubject to brutal Force? which is the higheſt Indignity that can be put, not only on Reaſon, which is the Candle of the Lord, but upon Religion it ſelf, which is the higheſt and moſt exalted Reaſon; and even upon the infinitely rational Nature of God, which can receive no Satisfaction but in a Rational Service, which muſt be free and ſpontaneous. Force has only a natural tendency, and therefore can only lawfully be uſed to cure brutal Paſſions, where Men act contrary to their Knowledg, and in defiance to their Reaſon; where the Inconveniences they ſuffer, may over-balance the Pleaſure they receive in indulging their unlawful Appetites. But he ſeems to be void of all Underſtanding himſelf, who by Force attempts to inform the Underſtanding. If Reaſons and Arguments cannot convince, it's downright Madneſs to think Fines, Impriſonments, or Tortures can.

6. The deſtroying Men, when the Publick Good does not require it, on pretence it's pleaſing to God, what is it, but in effect imagining he delights in Man's Blood, and Human Sacrifices? And as under the Law none were to be offered but unſpotted and

clean Beaſts; ſo here none are to be ſacrificed but pure and undefiled Men, who prefer the honouring and obeying God according to the beſt of their Knowledg, before any worldly Advantages whatever, even the ſaving their own Lives.

And as the Heathen Prieſts, amongſt the moſt brutiſh and barbarous Nations, introduced the ſacrificing of Men, not ſo much to gratify their Gods, as their own Ambition, there being no way more effectual to bring a Man (who otherwiſe would be in danger to be mark'd for a Sacrifice) into perfect Subjection; ſo the Chriſtian Prieſts (who have given the World as little reaſon to ſuſpect their neglecting any Means that make for their Advantage) promoted the ſacrificing the Peoples Lives and Properties much upon the ſame account: For they having obtained the Direction of the Sword, made it fall, with unparallel'd Cruelty, on all that oppoſed or (by a Separation) diſowned their uſurped Powers and Juriſdictions; by which means they made the People (on whom they impoſed what Doctrines they thought fit) abſolute Slaves, and Magiſtrates no better than their Executioners, who durſt not refuſe to put their Sentences in force.

7. It may be ſaid, That the Magiſtrate when he deprives People of their Lives or Properties, does not offer them as a Sacrifice to God,

God, but as God's Vicar in Spirituals, executes his Wrath on thoſe that offend him.

But if it be the Magiſtrate's Duty to puniſh thoſe Offences that relate meerly to God, it cannot be preſumed but that God has ſufficiently qualified him for that Employ; which how can it be, whilſt he is incapable of knowing, not only the greateſt part of the Actions, but all the Thoughts of Men, in which alone conſiſts by far the greater part of the Offences againſt him?

Nay, to qualify the Magiſtrate for this Employ, 'tis not ſufficient he knows the preſent, but it's neceſſary he ſhould diſcern the future Thoughts of Men, and how God himſelf will deal with them: for if God, inſtead of puniſhing, will highly reward thoſe that come in at the Eleventh, as well as at the firſt Hour, it would be unjuſt in the Subſtitute to puniſh, where the Principal (for whoſe Sake alone he puniſheth) will not only pardon, but highly reward. But,

8. This is ſo far from being ſo, that the Magiſtrate is obliged to puniſh, not only thoſe that will be, but thoſe that are actually innocent in the Sight of God; otherwiſe he could puniſh no Criminal at all, becauſe there's none but will pretend he has truly repented of his Crime, and conſequently is wholly innocent in the ſight of God. And the Magiſtrate being no Diſcerner of Hearts, could puniſh

niſh none for fear of puniſhing ſuch a One, had he not a Right to puniſh thoſe who with reſpect to God are entirely Innocent; ſo *vice verſa*, had he not a Power to forgive thoſe that in relation to God are as Nocent, it would not be in his Power to forgive any one. Nay, the Magiſtrate may juſtly be the Occaſion, even of the Death, not only of thoſe that have repented of their Crimes, but even of Innocent Perſons, as he is by forcing his Innocent Subjects into the Wars, where it's unavoidable but Numbers muſt be ſlain; and in attacking Ships and Towns of Enemies, where Children that never offended either God or Man, are very often deſtroyed; and this without any Fault in the Magiſtrate, becauſe protecting the Common-Wealth being his indiſpenſible Duty, any leſſer Good, in competition with that, ought to be looked upon *ſub ratione Mali*. All which ſufficiently ſhows, that the only thing he concerns himſelf with as Magiſtrate, is the Good of the Society; and that he rewards and puniſhes his Subjects only as it tends to this End, without reſpect to their being either Innocent or Nocent in the Sight of God; and that when he puniſhes any Sin, he does it not as it's a Sin againſt God, but as it's prejudicial to the Society; and conſequently he does not act as God's Deputy in puniſhing Offences meerly as they relate to him. But to make this (if it be poſſible) more plain.

10. The

10. The Magiſtrate, as he has no Right, ſo he pretends to none to puniſh for things that are owned by all to be notorious Offences againſt God, and where Men cannot plead Conſcience to juſtify themſelves, ſuch as Pride, Ambition, Ingratitude, breach of Promiſe, Lying, Uncharitableneſs, Envy, Ill-nature, Covetouſneſs, Prodigality; or indeed any thing elſe that does not invade the Right of others, or is conſiſtent with the Welfare of the Society. And if it be unreaſonable that he ſhould haraſs Men about theſe things, (which have ſome relation to the Civil Society, tho not ſufficient to erect Courts of Judicature about them) is it not much more ſo to moleſt them about nice Controverſies, Speculative Points, meer Ceremonies or Forms of outward Worſhip, in which the Intereſt of the Society is not at all concerned?

In a word; If the Magiſtrate is to puniſh for ſome things in Religion, and not for others, what other Rule can there be to know what belongs to his Juriſdiction, and what not, but that about thoſe things of Religion which relate to the Civil Society, he is to uſe the Force of the Society, and that what do not, ought wholly to be left to God and the Parties concerned? For as it's abſurd that the Force of the Society ſhould be imployed about things that do not belong to it; ſo it's very unjuſt that a Man ſhould not be ſuffered

to

to act as he judgeth beſt in thoſe things, wherein no other has an Intereſt, but his own eternal Good or Ill is only concerned.

11. God, who does not require of Men to be infallible, but to do their beſt to diſcover Truth, can never be ſuppoſed to be willing that they ſhould be puniſhed for invincible Error: But the Magiſtrate, who by reaſon of the infinite Variety of Mens Parts and Apprehenſions, does not know what Errors are invincible, and what not, cannot but puniſh unjuſtly, ſince he cannot tell whether the Perſon he puniſheth (ſuppoſing him in an Error) is in a Fault; or if in a Fault, cannot know what degrees of Weakneſs or Wilfulneſs it has, or how to proportion his Puniſhment according to the different Abilities of every individual Perſon; which he ought to do, ſince where much is given, much is required; and where little is given, as little is required: But as he is not capable of doing this, ſo he cannot tell after he has done his beſt, but that he has made them guilty of a much greater Fault than what he pretends to correct, by forcing them to act againſt their Conſciences. All which no leſs than demonſtrates, that the Magiſtrate is not qualified, and therefore not ordained to puniſh ſuch Offences, but that they are to be left to the Searcher of Hearts, the great and righteous Judg of all Men, who alone diſcerns all the Powers and

and Workings of Mens Minds, when they ſincerely ſeek after Truth, or by what (if by any) Default they miſs it; and who alone knows whom to puniſh, and how to proportion his Puniſhments.

12. To ſuppoſe God has conſtituted the Supream Powers to judg, not only concerning Civil Crimes, (for which he has ſufficiently qualified them) but alſo meerly Religious Ones, is inconſiſtent with the Juſtice, as well as Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God. For if we cannot ſuppoſe ſo very unjuſt and fooliſh a thing of a King on Earth, as that he ſhould conſtitute for his Vicegerents, thoſe of whom he certainly knew not one in a thouſand but would puniſh his Faithful Subjects, and that for no other Reaſon but becauſe they were ſo, and reward thoſe that were not ſo; How then can we ſuppoſe ſo very abſurd a thing of the King of Kings, that he ſhould appoint them for his Vicars in ſpiritual Matters, and arm them with a Coercive Power to puniſh thoſe Offences that relate ſolely to himſelf, who (as he could not but infallibly foreknow) would make uſe of their Power, to encourage even their rebelling againſt him, by ſetting up of falſe Gods in his ſtead? for Idolatry was every where quickly the Publick Religion of their Dominions, except amongſt God's own People the Jews; and even there very often it was the National Religion. And after their Captivity

Captivity until *Conſtantine*'s Time, not one of God's (ſuppoſed) Vicars in Matters of meer Religion, but were themſelves Idolaters, and did all of them diſcountenance, and ſeveral of them perſecute the Worſhippers of the true God: And when the Chriſtians (if Perſecutors deſerve that Name) made uſe of Force upon Chriſtians, what did it produce but Popiſh Superſtition and Idolatry?

13. Perſecution is ſo far from being a Means to promote the true Religion, that it muſt neceſſarily hinder its progreſs, becauſe the Infidels muſt think themſelves as much obliged to hinder the preaching of the Goſpel amongſt them, as the Chriſtians their Religion here: And in vain do we pray for their Converſion, whilſt we aſſert ſuch a Doctrine as will not let us ſuffer them to live here in order to their Converſion, nor them to ſuffer us to preach the Goſpel there. But this is not all, for had this Doctrine of promoting the true Religion by Force been believed by the Heathen, it would have obliged them to have extirpated the Chriſtian Religion; and certainly that can ſcarce be thought to be a Chriſtian Doctrine, which if practiſed, would have deſtroy'd the very Name of *Chriſtian*.

14. It may be ſaid, no Perſecution could extirpate the Chriſtian Religion, becauſe the ſevereſt Methods were ſo far from deſtroying it, that they were the Occaſion of its encreaſing the faſter. Not

Not to mention if this were ſo, and the Magiſtrate was to perſecute, it ought to be the true Religion, becauſe it's the way to make it increaſe, and by Parity of Reaſon uſe a contrary Method with falſe Religions; I ſay that Perſecution, if it continues but a ſhort time, will make any Religion to increaſe and flouriſh the more, becauſe the Bravery, the Courage of thoſe that ſuffer, prepares People to have a good Opinion of the Cauſe they ſuffer for: But if it continue for an Age, or Ages, ſo that the old Profeſſors are all deſtroyed, the ſucceeding Generations will all be of the Religion they are educated in. Thus we find Chriſtianity, by the continued Cruelty of its Enemies, rooted out of the greateſt Part of *Africa*, and other Places it entirely poſſeſſed.

And ſhould the Perſecution in *France* continue, the next Generation would be all Papiſts, as they are in *Spain* and *Portugal*: So that the Reaſon why Perſecution had not the like Effect under the Pagan Emperors, was, becauſe God did not permit it to continue long at a time, and not without great intermiſſions. But had all thoſe Emperors been for promoting by Force, what according to their Sentiments was the true Religion, they had utterly extirpated the very Name of a Chriſtian.

15. Nay,

15. Nay, had the Heathen Emperors abhorr'd Perſecution, (as all but what were Monſters did) yet they had been under an indiſpenſible Duty, as they valued the Peace and Welfare of Mankind in general, and of their Subjects in particular, to root out a Religion, which when it got Power into its Hands, would have no other meaſure of Juſtice and Equity than its own Intereſt, and would deprive Men, tho never ſo ſtrict Obſervers of the Laws of Morality, and the Society, of their Properties, and even Lives, (as the Chriſtian Emperors did) for acting according to their Conſciences. And the Heathens, who in ſpight of their Religious Differences, cultivated Peace and Friendſhip amongſt themſelves, could not but have a juſt Indignation for a Religion that (had Compulſion been a part of it) brought with it ſo many horrid Conſequences, which were ſufficient to make them not only reject it as contrary to the Light of Nature, but to treat the Profeſſors of it as publick Enemies of Mankind; who, like Vipers, could make no other return to thoſe that nouriſh them, but the ſooner to ſting them. And it's for the ſake of this Doctrin, that the Chriſtians, inſtead of propagating their Religion, have been ſo cruelly perſecuted of late Years in ſeveral Places: As in *Japan*, where it's evident they were not ſo rigorouſly dealt with upon account of any aver-

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ſion the Japoneſes had to the Chriſtian Religion, for they ſuffered it quietly a good while to grow amongſt them, who were not ſo zealous for a Uniformity, ſince they had ſeven or eight Sects as different, as the Mortality and Immortality of the Soul: No, it was the Doctrines and Practices of the perſecuting Chriſtians, that made them believe the Chriſtian Religion was dangerous and deſtructive to Human Societies.

16. Were the Magiſtrate ordained by God to puniſh for Matters meerly Religious, the Heathen Perſecutors, ſuppoſing they acted according to the beſt of their Skill, were no more to be condemned for puniſhing the Chriſtians, than a Judg is, when he acts according to the beſt of his Knowledg, in puniſhing an innocent Perſon. All that can be ſaid they were faulty in, was, their being governed by the Prejudices of their Education, and influenced by their Prieſts, and not ſuffering the Chriſtians, before they condemned them, fairly to repreſent their Religion, nor themſelves impartially to conſider it.

If this were the ſole Crime of the Heathen Perſecutors, I am afraid the Chriſtian ones are as much influenced by their Prieſts, or prejudiced by their Education, and do as little as they freely permit Men, before they condemn them, to propoſe their Opinions, back them with their Reaſons, and anſwer the

the Objections of their Adverſaries, that they may impartially judg whether they ought to receive or reject them: And if it be their Duty ſo to judg, all their Subjects ought to do the ſame; which is inconſiſtent with their hindering any by Penalties, from inſtructing them in thoſe Opinions, and the Reaſons and Arguments that make for them. If the Magiſtrate without thus examining ſhould condemn Men for profeſſing even an erroneous Opinion, that would no more juſtify him, than it would a Judg that condemns a Man, without hearing his Defence; or a Perſon that ſwears a thing to be true, without knowing whether it be ſo or no.

17. Thoſe Matters about which Chriſtians perſecute one another, are generally ſuch as neither tend to the Honour of God, nor the Good of Man, and at the beſt are but Appendices to Religion, and withal ſo perplext, myſterious and uncertain, that Men of the greateſt Learning, Judgment, and Probity, are ſtrangely divided in their Opinions about them; and conſequently they will not admit of ſuch Proof, as in Juſtice and Equity ought to ſubject a Man to Puniſhment; for there ſhould be as much certainty and evidence that the Matter one is condemned for, is a Crime, as that he is guilty of it: But can the Magiſtrate be as ſure (ſuppoſing a meer Error to be a Crime) that not only his Subjects

are

are in an Error, but himſelf in the Right; as he is, that the cauſleſs puniſhing them is Injuſtice and Tyranny? But could he be as certain, yet that depends either upon Criticiſm in the Sacred Tongues, and Skill in the Cuſtoms and Ways of ſpeaking in uſe amongſt the Jews, or in diſtinguiſhing between genuine and ſpurious Readings, or upon Metaphyſicks, School-Divinity, Fathers, Councils, Church Hiſtory, *&c.* which the Supream Powers have neither inclination nor leaſure to ſtudy and examine; and conſequently they cannot but act moſt tyrannically in making Laws for condemning whole Parties of Men at a venture, for things that, for ought they know, may be true, and which they do not think worth their while to examine: And yet to ſee them act contrary to their known indiſpenſible Duty in ruining their Subjects about ſuch Points, is ſtrangely unaccountable: All that can be ſaid, is, *Deliranf Reges, plectuntur Achivi.*

18. To prevent the Magiſtrate's intermedling, God has expreſly declared, That he will have the Tares and Wheat grow together until the Harveſt, or Day of Judgment, where the Angels are the Reapers, *&c.* And the Reaſon is, leſt the Wheat be rooted up with the Tares; which relates not to Civil, but only to Matters meerly Religious, where Men generally (ſo groſly do they miſtake) root up the

Wheat inſtead of the Tares; and the ſame Reaſon will hold, not only againſt the rooting up, but any ways moleſting them.

The Magiſtrate ought to render to God thoſe things which belong to him, as well as claim to himſelf what is *Ceſar*'s Due; but if he aſſumes an Abſolute (*viz.* a Legiſlative and Coercive) Power in Matters wholly relating to God, he leaves nothing to him, but uſurps his peculiar and inſeparable Power and Juriſdiction, and is as much guilty of Treaſon againſt the King of Heaven, as a private Perſon in aſſuming a Sovereign Power over his fellow Subjects, is guilty of Treaſon againſt his King: and it will no more excuſe the Magiſtrate, if he whom he puniſheth ſhould have committed an Offence againſt God, than it would the other, if his fellow Subjects had broke the Law of the Land: But the Infinite inequality that is between the King of Kings and a King on Earth, muſt ſtrangely aggravate the Magiſtrate's Crime. If God wanted either Skill to judg, or Power to puniſh thoſe Offences that concern himſelf only, there might be ſome colour for the over-officiouſneſs of the Magiſtrate, if uncommiſſioned and uncalled for, he offers his infallible Judgment and almighty Arm; otherwiſe there can be no Reaſon, as *Grotius* (*de jur. Bell. & Pac.* C. 30. l. 2.) obſerves, *Cur non talia*

talia delicta Deo relinquantur punienda, qui ad ea noſcenda eſt ſapientiſſimus, ad expendenda æquiſſimus, ad vindicanda potentiſſimus.

And this I take is ſufficient to ſhow that the Magiſtrate has not only no Right to a Coercive Power in Matters meerly Religious, but that ſuch a Power is directly contrary to the Honour of God, and moſt deſtructive of Mens Eternal and Temporal Happineſs, and conſequently the greateſt and moſt comprehenſive of all Sins whatever. But becauſe this is a Point of ſo great a Conſequence to Mankind, I will moſt impartially examine the Reaſons and Arguments (how frivolous ſoever they are) that the Defenders of Perſecution urge in its behalf.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

An Anſwer to Arguments from Scripture on behalf of Perſecution.

I Having offered ſeveral, and (if I flatter not my ſelf) concluding Arguments againſt the Magiſtrate's uſing Force in other Matters than thoſe relating to the Civil Society, I ſhall now examine with all impartiality, the Reaſons that are urged in behalf of the contrary Opinion, from Divine and Human Authority, and from Reaſon: But firſt as to Divine Authority.

1. All that can be urged from the New Teſtament, with the leaſt colour of Reaſon, is contained in *Rom.* 13. where it's ſaid, *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil: Wilt thou not be afraid of the Powers? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame. If thou doſt that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain.* Where, ſay they, by Evil and Good Works, not only

only thoſe Actions that relate to the Civil Society, but thoſe that are meerly Religious are meant.

To make this out, they ought to prove,

(1.) That meer Errors of the Underſtanding are evil Works: So that thoſe who act juſtly in all Matters of a Civil Nature, and in all others according to the beſt of their Underſtanding, are evil Doers.

(2.) That the Apoſtle means ſuch here, which ought fully to be proved, becauſe without it the Magiſtrate's Juriſdiction is not to be preſumed, much leſs Penal Laws to be extended.

But not to mention, that they whoſe Opinions are no wiſe prejudicial to others, are never for the ſake of thoſe Opinions termed Malefactors or evil Doers, it's clear from the Text, that Evil and Good Works there ſpoken of, relate only to Civil Matters; becauſe otherwiſe the latter Part will not conſiſt with the former, where it's ſaid, *If thou wilt not fear the Power, do good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame:* Which, ſuppoſing Good and Evil relate to Matters ſimply Religious, was ſo far from being true, that they were at that time perſecuted for doing Good, and encouraged in doing Evil; and conſequently the Apoſtle's Reaſoning would be ſo far from being an Argument (as he here intends it) for the Chriſtians paying Obedience and Tribute

to the Powers in being, that it would have been a good one to the contrary, since they bore the Sword worse than in vain, being only a Terror to good Works, and were not God's but the Devil's Ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

The Primitive Christians (it's certain) would have been loth it should have been taken in this Sense, since it would have given an unanswerable Argument to *Nero* (to whom the Apostle here requires Obedience) and the other Emperors, for punishing Christians, who according to their Notions, taking Evil in this Sense, were the most evil Doers.

2. As to the Old Testament, that's positive, say they, that the Magistrate ought to punish for Idolatry, (which is no Injury to the State, but an Offence simply Religious) and consequently has a Right to use Force in those Matters: For *Job* (Chap. 31. 28.) speaking of Idolatry, saith, *This were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judg.*

But to give no other Answer, it appears from the very Prints of our Bibles, that *to be punished by the* is not in the Original, which only saith, *For this might be accounted to me an Iniquity*; and agreeable to the Hebrew the Septuagint renders it, ϗ τȣτὸ μὸι ἄρα ανομία ἢ μεγίστη λογισθειὴ. It's an easy thing to have Proofs, if Men when they cannot find them are resolved to make them.

3. But

3. But they further add, That if by the Jewiſh Law Idolaters, and thoſe that denied the God of *Iſrael*, were to be put to death; by the ſame Reaſon Chriſtians, who ought not to be leſs zealous for the Honour of God, ſhould deſtroy all Idolaters and Blaſphemers.

I anſwer; The Jewiſh Laws oblige no Nation but that of *Iſrael*, to whom alone they were given: And if any of theſe Laws are now obligatory, it's not becauſe they were commanded them, but as they are Parts of the Law of Nature; for there were ſeveral things requir'd under the Jewiſh Oeconomy, which are ſo far from being now Obligatory, that they are utterly unlawful. Therefore to conclude, that a thing which was binding to the Jews, is ſo to the Chriſtians, it ought to be proved to be part of the Law of Nature, or at leaſt that they are under the very ſame Circumſtances; and there can be no reaſon why it ſhould hold in one Caſe, and not in another.

But whoever conſiders this Point, will quickly perceive as vaſt a difference as can be: For the Jewiſh Common-Wealth being a perfect Theocracy, God himſelf was their King, and as ſuch he gave them their whole Body of Politick Laws, with no other Sanction but what was Civil, *viz.* Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments; and did himſelf judicially determine Controverſies of Legal Rights, and

other Matters of Moment: So that he was not to be conſidered by them only ſimply as he was the Creator of all Men, but as their King, the Laws eſtabliſhed concerning the Worſhipping of one God, being the Civil Law of the Nation, and a Fundamental of their Conſtitution: So that none could be a Member of that Common-Wealth, without owning the God that brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*; and they that revolted from him, by diſowning him for their God, (it being impoſſible to own him for their King, and yet diſown him for their God) were proceeded againſt as Traitors and Rebels: So that ſuch a manifeſt Revolt no-wiſe conſiſting with his Kingſhip, there was an abſolute neceſſity that all Idolatry ſhould be rooted out of God's peculiar Kingdom, the Land of *Canaan*. And that it was for this Reaſon, is evident from this one Conſideration, becauſe in all other Places where the Jews extended their Conqueſts, none were put to death, nor puniſhed for their Idolatry, tho it were manifeſt all were guilty of it; it reached only to the Members of the Jewiſh Common-Wealth, who as they were free People upon their coming out of *Egypt*, ſo it was not without their expreſs Conſent (*Exod.* 19.) that God became their King; and conſequently for diſowning him, they were moſt juſtly treated as Rebels and Traitors.

But

But Chriſt, as he had no Civil Power himſelf, ſo he did not eſtabliſh thoſe Precepts he was to deliver with any Temporal Sanctions. But as thoſe of the Law were meerly Temporal, ſo thoſe of the Goſpel are purely Eternal; *He that does this ſhall live, and he that does it not ſhall be damned:* Yea, Chriſt was ſo far from beſtowing a Temporal *Canaan* on his Diſciples, that he foretold they ſhould *ſuffer Perſecution for his ſake.* And he, when his Diſciples urged a Precedent from the Jewiſh Diſpenſation to oblige him to deſtroy, ſeverely rebuked them, ſaying, *Ye know not what Spirit you are of; for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy, but to ſave Mens Lives:* Which is far from being true, if Men are to be puniſhed with Death for Idolatry, or material Blaſphemy; for then the Chriſtians would think themſelves obliged to deſtroy the Indians and other Heathens for Idolatry, in owning more Gods than own, and all Jews and Turks for Blaſphemy, in denying more than one to be God: And the Proteſtants the Papiſts, for worſhipping a bit of Bread; and the Papiſts them for blaſpheming their breaden God: And the different Parties of the Trinitarians, not only the Antitrinitarians, but each the other, ſince they condemn one the other of either Idolatry or Blaſphemy.

But this is ſo far from being true, that the Goſpel expreſly requires the Chriſtians ſo to walk

walk in Wiſdom towards thoſe without, that they give offence neither to Jew nor Gentile; and is ſo far from juſtifying any violent Means againſt them, that it requires we ſhould not only allow them the narrow Meaſure of Juſtice, but that Charity, Liberality, and Bounty muſt be ſuperadded; *we muſt do good, not only to the Houſhold of Faith, but to all Men.* And if this be the Method the Goſpel requires Chriſtians ſhould obſerve to Infidels, it cannot be preſumed they ought to treat one another leſs kindly for leſſer Differences. And when the firſt Chriſtians differed amongſt themſelves about the obſervation of the Moſaical Rites, *&c.* the Apoſtle *Paul* was not ſo much concerned about the Controverſies themſelves, as that they might not be the Occaſion of any Uncharitableneſs, Unkindneſs, Variance and Strife; therefore he frequently recommends to them Love and Peace in the moſt paſſionate Terms, and tells them, they muſt deal with one another in the Spirit of Meekneſs, bear one anothers Burdens, otherwiſe they could not fulfil the Law of Chriſt: And that we cannot walk worthy of our Vocation whereunto we are called, but with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in Love: And it's evident, that the Unity of the Spirit, the Bond of Peace, Love and Concord, cannot be preſerved, but by the Rule the Apoſtle gives, that

that the Strong ſhould bear with the Weak, and the Weak not judg the Strong; and that every one is to be fully perſwaded in his own Mind, and not to judg his Brother, but to leave him to the Judgment of God; and the Reaſon he gives is, becauſe it's a Matter that does not belong to his Judgment, but to God's, and a Man's own Conſcience: For what art thou, O Man, that judgeth the Servant of another? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. And according to theſe Directions we find that the Apoſtle is ſo far from requiring the Gentile Church to excommunicate the Jewiſh for following their Superſtition, (tho it did in a manner make void the Death of Chriſt) that he orders the Gentiles to deny themſelves in ſeveral things, rather than give an Offence to their weak Brethren.

This way of managing Controverſies ought to have been the Meaſure by which the ſucceeding Ages of the Church (whether the Civil Magiſtrate was a Member of it or not) ought to have formed themſelves. And when the Apoſtle, who had an infallible Aſſiſtance, thought fit to treat of theſe Matters in ſuch an obliging Method, as the only way to maintain Chriſtian Charity, and to lead Men into the Knowledg of the Truth; thoſe who cannot pretend to ſuch a Direction, but are as ſubject to be miſtaken as thoſe they differ from, ought not imperiouſly to dictate, much

much leſs urge the Magiſtrate to force their Dictates on the Conſciences of their Brethren, whom *tho weak* they *are to receive*, &c.

In a word; For the Magiſtrate to pretend to have a Right upon an Eccleſiaſtical Account, as Head of the Church, to puniſh Men becauſe they are either Schiſmaticks, Hereticks, or Infidels, is to puniſh them for that very Reaſon for which he has nothing to do with them, becauſe the Churches Power wholly conſiſting in putting Men out of her Communion, has nothing to do to judg thoſe that are without, and conſequently cannot authorize the Magiſtrate to uſe them ill: and indeed he is ſo far from having ſuch a Right upon his being a Chriſtian, that the *Apoſtle* declares, that the Weapons of our Chriſtian Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual; and the uſing of Violence he makes the Mark of a carnal and reprobate Mind; for it's he that is born after the Fleſh, that perſecutes him that's born after the Spirit: But for ſuch a one to perſecute, is impoſſible, becauſe the Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Meekneſs, which are certainly inconſiſtent with the Spirit of Perſecution; which where it prevails, deſtroys the Fruits of the Spirit; for it's naturally as impoſſible to love Perſecutors, as Perſecution and the fear of Retaliation, makes Men hate thoſe they ill uſe, as much as thoſe they are ill uſed by.

5. To

5. To evade the almoſt innumerable Texts that are levelled againſt Perſecution, and ſhow after what manner we are to deal with thoſe who differ in their Sentiments from us, it's ſaid, they concern private Chriſtians only, but do not hinder them from uſing contrary Methods when the Magiſtrate requires them.

But how can the Magiſtrate, by becoming ſubject to Chriſt's Laws, have a Right to oblige his Subjects to act directly againſt them? No, thoſe Goſpel-Rules are eternally Obligatory, as being built, not only on the general Good of Mankind (the only Foundation of all thoſe Duties Men owe one another) but upon the Honour of God; and therefore they that would rather obey God than Man, ought to be no ways inſtrumental in putting any perſecuting Laws in Execution, which are null and void in themſelves, as being contrary to the Laws of God: and the Magiſtrate, and all that aſſiſt him in depriving any of their Lives or Properties on this account, are as guilty of Murder and Robbery, as if they ſhould ſerve Men ſo for not committing Perjury, or any other Crime, that is both againſt the Honour of God, and the Good of Man. Beſides, this Suppoſition renders the Chriſtians, eſpecially with reſpect to the Heathens, moſt vile and ſcandalous Hypocrites, in being kind and obliging to them only, when they could not well help it; but no ſooner were their Circum-

Circumſtances changed, but the Diſguiſe is to be thrown off, and all their former moſt endearing Rules are to be laid aſide; and the poor Pagans, who before were to be uſed ſo tenderly, are to be ſtript, not only of their Properties, but even of their Lives.

CHAP. II.

Arguments from Humane Authority, anſwered.

IT's ſaid, That the Chriſtians ever ſince they had Power in their Hands, have not only puniſhed Blaſphemers, and common Swearers, but the Erroneous, whether in Matters of Faith or Diſcipline.

1. If by Blaſphemers they mean thoſe that are guilty of formal Blaſphemy, it's nothing to the purpoſe; becauſe the Intereſt of the Society requires that they ſhould be puniſhed, as well as Atheiſts, and that for the ſame Reaſon too; which alſo requires that common Swearers, (who can no more pretend Conſcience than Blaſphemers or Atheiſts) ſhould be reſtrained by Penalties, becauſe otherwiſe Oaths which are the Bonds of Humane Society, will have but ſmall Force on thoſe who by frequent ſwearing, run the riſque of breaking

ing them daily, and beſide give a pernicious Example to others.

But if Men out of Conſcience worſhip falſe Gods, and are thereby guilty of what is called *material Blaſphemy*, the reaſon for puniſhing them wholly ceaſeth, for Force cannot convince, but only make them falſe to their Conſciences; and they that are ſo, will never be true to the Publick: therefore the Magiſtrate is ſo far from having a Right to hinder them from honouring thoſe falſe Gods, that he ought to puniſh thoſe, who whilſt they pretend to worſhip them, do diſhonour them by Blaſphemy, Perjury, or any other manifeſt Contempt; nay, God himſelf will puniſh ſuch Contempts as if done to himſelf, and conſequently will puniſh the Magiſtrate for hindering them from worſhipping thoſe falſe Gods, when they believe them to be true Ones.

2. But as to Chriſtian Magiſtrates puniſhing for Matters wherein Conſcientious Perſons may and do differ, it ſhows their great Wickedneſs and Impiety in acting contrary to the Light of Nature, and thoſe Precepts and Practices of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; and (if there be any weight in meer Human Authority) I may add contrary to the Sentiments of the Primitive Church for the firſt three hundred Years; who we do not find but were all unanimous in condemning the uſe of Force in

Matters

Matters of Religion; and had they been of another Opinion, nothing could be more abſurd than thoſe frequent Addreſſes they made to the Heathen for Liberty of Conſcience: For then they could not deny that it was the Duty of the Heathen Magiſtrate, as long as they rejected what he judged to be the true Religion, to puniſh them; nor could they urge any thing for themſelves, but a ſhameleſs begging the thing in diſpute, which the Magiſtrate (the proper Judg) had determin'd againſt them. And to hear them acknowledg, that were the Power in their Hands, they were oblig'd to ſerve them after the ſame manner, could not but encourage the Heathen in their Perſecution. But they were ſo far from having any ſuch Thoughts, that even when the Empire became Chriſtian, the very Heathen Worſhip (as the Biſhop of *Sarum* obſerves in his moſt excellent Preface to *Lactantius*) was not only tolerated for a whole Age together, but the Heathens continued to be in the chief Employments of the Empire.

3. Compulſion was not only againſt the Senſe of the Primitive Chriſtians, but the reſt of Mankind: for tho the Differences amongſt them were more in Number, and wider than thoſe amongſt the Chriſtians, yet we do not find that they uſed Force to compel one another. *Socrates* (it's true) was put to death for his Religion; but were not the People (tho

(tho ſtill averſe to his Principles) as ſoon as their Fury was abated, ſenſible of the Crime they had committed, and of the Injury done him? Therefore to make him what Amends they could, they erected a Statue to his Memory; and moſt of thoſe that ſet them on were ſo abhorred, that this, together with their own Remorſe, made them become their own Executioners. But what the Senſe of the Heathen was about this Matter, cannot be better known than from the Sentiments of *Gallio*, the Town-Clerk of *Epheſus*, *Agrippa* and *Felix*, in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. Nay ſo zealous Aſſertors of Liberty of Conſcience were the Heathens, that we find *Themiſtius* and other Philoſophers uſing all their Eloquence to perſwade the Chriſtian Emperors to give Liberty to the different Sects of Chriſtians, whilſt at the ſame time the Biſhops were urging them to perſecute their Brethren.

If the Heathens would have perſecuted any, it would have been the Jewiſh Nation, whoſe Religion they moſt diſliked; yet we do not find they were ſo uſed by the various Maſters they were under, from their firſt being ſubject unto Foreigners, until the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and their being no longer a Nation, but by the mad *Antiochus*, who at laſt grievouſly lamented that Crime. Nay, *Nero* himſelf, the firſt Perſecutor of Chriſtians, durſt not do it bare-fac'd, but pretended they were

Incendiaries, and ſet *Rome* on fire, and therefore were to be puniſhed as Enemies to the State: And it was their being ſo repreſented, that was more than any thing elſe the Cauſe of their Sufferings. For *Trajan*, as ſoon as he perceived that they were Innocent, and diſobeyed no Laws of the Empire, but thoſe that forbad their Worſhip, ſtraight commanded that they ſhould be no longer enquired after. And *Adrian*, under ſevere Penalties, forbad any to accuſe them: The ſame did *Antoninus Pius*. And *Aurelius* went further, and made it Death to inform againſt them. Nay, *Commodus* himſelf, as great a Tyrant as he was otherwiſe, enacted the ſame moſt juſt Law; ſo that it was then no leſs than a Capital Crime to cauſe any to be moleſted upon the Account of Religion, tho ſuppoſed never ſo falſe.

4. Nay, I think I may add, that Perſecutors act not only contrary to the Senſe of Mankind, but their own Sentiments: for ask any of them, why the ſwift and ſudden Encreaſe of the Mahometan Religion ſhould not be as good an Argument for its Truth, as 'tis for that of the Chriſtians; they ſtraightway anſwer, That maugre its ſwift Progreſs, 'tis little leſs than a Demonſtration of its Falſhood, that it has the Character of Perſecution annexed to it, and made uſe of Violence as a lawful Means for its promotion. Which Anſwer

ſwer of theirs ſhows, that themſelves believe Force an unlawful Means of promoting Religion; for how elſe can that be an Argument of the Falſeneſs of any Religion, if it be a Means ordained by God to promote the True? And therefore the Mahometans may juſtly ſay, How can the Chriſtians condemn them for uſing that Method, which themſelves, as ſoon as they get Power into their Hands, (and the Mahometans could do it no ſooner) practiſed with far greater Cruelty, even one upon the other? Thus they give occaſion for the Enemies of the Chriſtian Religion to triumph, and that ſo much the more confidently, by how much leſs Chriſtians ſuffer under them for Religion, than they do under one another.

5. Nay I may go further and add, that there's no Party of Chriſtians but what have, ever ſince Perſecution has been in uſe, expreſly condemned it, and have writ in defence of Liberty of Conſcience. And tho the Orthodox made uſe of Perſecution as well as the Arians, yet they not only condemn'd it, but thought it ſo very odious, that they ſuppoſed it as great a Crime as they could brand their Adverſaries with. And *Athanaſius, in Epiſt. ad Solit.* ſaith, *Perſecution alone is a manifeſt Proof that they (the Arians) have neither Piety, nor the fear of God: For,* adds he, *it's eſſential to Piety, not to force any in imitation*

of our Saviour; *it's the Devil that comes with violent Means.* And the Synod of *Alexandria* condemns all Force in Religion, and reproaches the Arians as the Inventers and Promoters of it. It's ſtrange they ſhould be ſo very forgetful, as not to mind that the Nicene Fathers over-perſwaded *Conſtantine*, contrary to his Faith given in a Publick Edict for Liberty of Worſhip, not only to deprive and baniſh thoſe of the Clergy that profeſſed Arianiſm, but even to put all Men to death on whom any of *Arius* his Works were found.

6. But it may be ſaid, That if the Chriſtian Prieſts in the firſt General Council, and all ever ſince, have been for Perſecution, there muſt be ſome very good Reaſon to influence them.

I anſwer; Juſt as much as influences the Jewiſh Prieſts not to own Jeſus to be the Meſſias: For as they were prejudiced againſt him, becauſe he did not come to advance their Temporal Power, ſo the Chriſtian Prieſts have been as much prejudiced againſt thoſe Goſpel-Methods of Love, Gentleneſs, *&c.* as being wholly inconſiſtent with their Pride, Ambition, and that Dominion over Conſcience they ſo much affected; as is manifeſt by their own Hiſtories, which repreſent them after ſuch a manner ever ſince Perſecution prevailed, as one would imagine he was reading a Story of Devils, rather than of the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles.

ſtles. But if there is Confuſion, and every evil Work, where Envying and Striſe is, it's no wonder theſe ſhould prevail in the higheſt manner, when Barbarity and Cruelty are ſuperadded. And not only Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, but the beſt of the Clergy, almoſt as ſoon as Perſecution was in uſe, give a very ſcandalous Character of their Body; as St. *Jerom*, St. *Baſil*, St. *Ambroſe*, St. *Hilary*, who in his Comment on the *Pſalms*, ſcruples not to compare them to the Scribes and Phariſees; and St. *Gregory Nazianzen*, who in his firſt Oration, amongſt other things, ſaith, *They are no better than Scribes and Phariſees*; that they looked on the Prieſthood, not as a Miniſtry of which they muſt give an Account, but as a Magiſtracy which is liable to no examination; that no Charity was obſerved in them, but only Anger and Paſſion; that their Piety did only conſiſt in condemning the Impiety of other Men, whoſe Conduct they obſerved, not to reclaim, but to deſame; that they blamed or praiſed Men, not becauſe of their good or bad Life, but according to the Party they embraced; that they admired in themſelves what they ſharply cenſured in another Party; that they wrangled about Trifles, on the ſpecious Pretences of defending the Faith; that they were abhorred by the Heathen, and deſpiſed by all good Men among the Chriſtians.

7. In a word; There can be no Argument from Human Authority for Perſecution, becauſe that deſtroys any Argument that's built upon Authority, even in the Judgment of the Perſecutors themſelves: For ask them why the Council of *Ariminum*, which was double in number to that of *Nice*, and which even the Nicene Fathers themſelves ſubſcribed, is not of any Authority; the Anſwer is, Becauſe they were not a Free Council, but were over-awed by the Emperor. But if Perſecution deſtroyed their Authority, the Reaſon will hold againſt any other Council or Meeting of Men ever ſince Force has been in faſhion. And it's no wonder that the Nicene Fathers who were ſo divided into Parties and Factions, and full of Heats, Fewds, and Quarrels, (as *Marvel* in that ſmall, but admirable Eſſay of Creeds and Councils fully ſhows) ſhould revenge themſelves on their Adverſaries, on pretence of advancing the true Religion; or that the Arians, when they had been ſo provoked, ſhould ſerve them after the ſame manner; or that the different Parties after theſe Precedents, which muſt neceſſarily encreaſe their Hatreds and Animoſities, ſhould be more and more for perſecuting one the other. But more than enough of Human Authority. And,

Now I ſhall examine what they urge from Reaſon, for the Magiſtrate's uſing Force: Which

Which may be concluded under theſe three Heads. 1. That it cauſeth People impartially to conſider the Arguments and Motives that make for the true Religion. 2. That it hinders the Propagation of Errors. 3. That the Intereſt of the Common-Wealth obligeth the Magiſtrate not to permit different Profeſſions of Religion.

CHAP. III.

Object. *That Compulſion tends to make People impartially conſider, examined.*

1. I Agree with them, that nothing can be more agreeable to the Dignity, and more apparently the Duty of Rational Creatures, than to make a ſtrict Inquiſition, in their advanced and capable Years, into Matters of Religion; and that of all the Uſes Reaſon was deſigned for, the chief, no doubt, was in relation to our Eternal Happineſs: But how can we expect that Happineſs from the Hand of God, if what we are to believe or practiſe be by meer accident, or for the ſake of Worldly Intereſt, and not the Effects of our own Induſtry and Reaſoning? for God will judg us as we are Rational Creatures, and conſequently our Rewards from him will be in a juſt

Proportion to the uſe we make of our Reaſon.

This being premiſed, it's evident nothing can well be a greater Crime than to hinder People from a free Exerciſe of their Reaſon in Matters of Religion, which, I ſay, nothing can more effectually do than Puniſhments and Rewards: For what can bias and prejudice more than Puniſhments on the one hand, and on the other not only Protection, but the Proſpect of Preferment and Advantages? for as much weight as they carry in Mens Minds, ſo much will they be influenced by them. And to put Diſcountenance and Puniſhment in one Scale, and Impunity and Preferment in the other, is as likely a way to make a Man judg impartially for himſelf, as it is to bribe and threaten a Judg to make him judg ſo for others.

In a word; What can be more abſurd, than to ſuppoſe, that the way to make Men conſider calmly, and without prejudice of thoſe things that require their utmoſt attention, is to provoke them to Paſſion by ill uſage, and to diſtract them on one hand by the Terrors of Puniſhment, and to agitate them as ſtrongly on the other by the hopes of worldly Enjoyments?

2. It's uſually ſaid, Men are careleſs and negligent, and of themſelves unapt to make a ſtrict Inquiſition into Religion; therefore are to be forced.

But Force will make them but more ſo, and inſtead

inſtead of remedying, encreaſe the Malady: for Men will then be afraid to examine the Magiſtrate's Religion for fear of finding it falſe, and any other for fear of finding it true; both which will equally ſubject them to Puniſhment. In ſuch Circumſtances if they examine at all, it will be very ſlightly and partially: for a ſmall, a very ſmall Reaſon will make moſt Men profeſs a Religion on which their worldly Happineſs depends; and it muſt be a monſtrous one indeed, that they will not make a ſhift to own, rather than be all their lives ſubject to Puniſhment. In ſhort; What can be more unnatural than to imagine, that to terrify People into this or that Perſwaſion, is a more likely way to induce them to examine impartially the different Perſwaſions, than to let them freely examine, and as freely profeſs what upon examination they are perſwaded is the Truth?

3. If Men ought to be influenced in the choice of their Religion by no other Motive than that of their Eternal Happineſs, what right can the Magiſtrate have to make them do otherwiſe by the Awes and Bribes of this World? To pretend to eſtabliſh a Church by Penal Laws, is inconſiſtent with the very Nature of it, becauſe it's eſſential to a Church to be a voluntary Society, that meet for no other Intent than to ſerve God as they think moſt agreeable to his Will. If Men there-

therefore aſſociate not for this Conſideration, but becauſe of Penal Laws, they may be called any thing ſooner than a Church.

4. If worldly Awes and Bribes were away, there could be little or nothing to prejudice Men in their grand Choice; Education would not then make half ſo deep an Impreſſion: For it's Perſecution that's the Occaſion that People of different Perſwaſions contract ſo early and ſo great an Averſion one for the other, that it becomes in a manner part of their Nature; and makes it ſo very difficult to perſwade them to hear, with tolerable Patience, what their Adverſaries have to offer: but were they taught to have that Love and Kindneſs which is due from different Sects to each other, and inſtead of being frightned from, were heartily adviſed to examine, and impartially conſider other Perſwaſions beſides thoſe they were bred in, Education could create little or no Prejudice in Mens Minds; who when they found themſelves in an Error, (as, what thinking Men do not diſcover ſome imbibed in their greener Years?) would then as freely leave them for the ſake of their Souls, as they do now their Diet or Phyſick, when they judg the Health of their Bodies requires it; nor would others then be more diſturbed or concerned at the one than at the other: I am ſure there is more reaſon to change in one Caſe than in the other, ſince the

the profeſſing an Opinion one believes to be falſe, is ſo far from doing him good, that that alone turns it to rank Poiſon; which is otherwiſe in Phyſick, where a Man may be cured by a Medicine he has no Faith in. By what has been ſaid, it's evident that Force is ſo far from cauſing People impartially to conſider, that it can only ſerve either to prejudice them as they become capable of judging, or elſe when they have choſen, make them act againſt their Judgments.

5. But it's urged; That when the Magiſtrate is of the true Religion himſelf, his uſing Force will contribute to make others to be ſo, by cauſing them to conſider (ſince it's their Intereſt ſo to do) the Reaſons and Arguments that make for the true Religion.

That the Magiſtrate's uſing Force when he is of the true Religion, tends to make others profeſs it, there is no doubt; but that it is by making them impartially conſider, ought not to be taken for granted, ſince we find it as effectual to make them imbrace a falſe as a true Religion, (elſe the French Tyrant had not forced above a Million to turn Papiſts); and therefore by how much the Number of the Erroneous Magiſtrates is greater than of the Orthodox, by ſo much more it cauſeth the Profeſſion of falſe Perſwaſions: And if we ſhould judg what may, by what has already happened, not only before but ſince Chriſt's

Chriſt's coming, it's as probable that all Magiſtrates may uſe Force to promote Error, as that any one ſhould do it to propagate Truth. It's abſurd to ſuppoſe Perſecution makes Men impartially conſider, becauſe they generally look on it as ſo juſt a Prejudice againſt any Religion that uſeth it, that it tempts them without any further looking into it, to conclude it wants Reaſon to ſupport it ſelf, and therefore the Profeſſors of it have recourſe to brutal Force to uphold it; and the way that Perſecutors take to make Men hate their Perſons, is a very improper way to take off the Prejudices they have to their Opinions; and as Suffering prejudices them againſt the Religion that cauſeth it, ſo it ſtrangely endears to them the Religion for which they ſuffer, and makes them apt to think, nothing but the Grace of God could cauſe them to adhere ſo firmly to their Religion, and apply to themſelves the Prophecies that foretel the Perſecution of true Believers. And in ſuch a Caſe it's almoſt impoſſible to convince them they have ſuffered for being in the wrong. And,

7. As to the Spectators, it will be very apt to produce the ſame Effects, and fill them with Horror and Indignation againſt the Principles of ſuch Men as go about to ruin innocent Perſons for ſerving God according to Conſcience, and make them judg as favourably of the Sufferers; for there's a natural Compaſſi-

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on that follows all in Miſery, which creates likeneſs of Affection, and this very often likeneſs of Perſwaſion, eſpecially when they ſuppoſe the Sufferers would not expoſe themſelves to thoſe Puniſhments, which by a Compliance they might eaſily avoid, were they not fully convinced of the Truth of their Opinions. And it's very probable that the Quakers (to give no other Inſtance) had not been ſo very numerous, had not the Sufferings, which they generally bore with more than ordinary Reſolution, created in many of the by-ſtanders, not only an Averſion for the Church that perſecuted them, but a very great Eſteem of them, and by degrees of their Opinions.

8. That violent and rough Methods are not the way to make prejudiced Perſons impartially conſider, is evident from the contrary Method that all Men take when they endeavour to perſwade: And they are but little acquainted with Mankind, who do not know how abſolutely neceſſary it is for a Man, by all inſinuating ways, to ingratiate himſelf with thoſe he endeavours to perſwade, eſpecially if it be of the falſeneſs of an Opinion they have a long time imbibed. Nay, I deſire no body to go further than his own Breaſt for an Experiment, whether ever Violence gained any thing on his Opinion; or whether Arguments managed but with Heat, did not loſe ſomewhat of their Efficacy, and have not made

him

him even the more obſtinate in his Opinion: So much concern'd is Human Nature to preſerve the Liberty of that Part wherein lies the Dignity of Man, which could it be impoſed on by Force, would make him but very little different from a Beaſt. The propereſt Means to maintain any thing, are thoſe that firſt made it grow: if therefore the Goſpel had owed its firſt Encreaſe and Progreſs to Force, that had been ſtill the beſt Means to ſupport it; but ſince it was nurſed, and grew up by fair Means, they muſt be the fitteſt to preſerve it. The Apoſtles, in conquering the almoſt invincible Prejudices of the Jews and Gentiles, made uſe of all thoſe endearing Methods that are ſo directly oppoſite to Force. And St. *Paul*, the great Converter of the Gentiles, *became all things to all Men, that he might gain ſome.* And he tells *Timothy*, That *the Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but muſt be gentle to all Men, apt to teach, patient, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God will peradventure give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.* And if this be the way to make even the Obſtinate acknowledg the Truth, the contrary Method can but the more prejudice and harden them; and they muſt not be the Servants of the Lord, but of another Maſter, that either practiſe it themſelves, or what is as bad, endeavour to perſwade others to uſe it.

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It's ſaid, that the Apoſtles could work on Peoples Prejudices and Paſſions by Miracles, and that therefore they had no occaſion for Force. But if whilſt they had the Power of doing Miracles, they were obliged to make uſe of all thoſe endearing Arts to gain on the Affections of thoſe they deſigned to proſelite, there is much more reaſon now to do it, and even to double the natural Means, when the ſupernatural Ones have ceaſed, as the only way that remains to cauſe Men to hear and conſider.

The contrary Method is ſo unlikely to produce ſuch an Effect, that I believe there can be no Inſtance given of any Man being ſincerely brought over by it to embrace any Religion; tho, no doubt, there have been ſeveral, who when they have been forced to profeſs a Religion contrary to their Conſciences, have at laſt made a ſhift (ſo natural is it for Men to love their preſent Eaſe) to ſtifle the Checks of their Conſciences, and at laſt to believe it: But this is evidently wicked, becauſe it's doing a real Evil, on pretence that Good may come of it.

9. It has been all along the Pretence of Perſecutors, to juſtify their Cruelty, that thoſe they puniſhed were obſtinate and perverſe, and would not impartially conſider. Upon this Head *Antiochus* (as *Joſephus* in his *Dominion of Reaſon* tells us) put to Death great numbers

numbers of the Jews, becauſe they were ſo obſtinate to refuſe what he judged an indifferent thing, the eating Swines Fleſh: And on the ſame Pretence of Obſtinacy, *Pliny (Epiſt. 2. l. 10.)* murdered a great many Chriſtians. And the Chriſtian Perſecutors have all along made uſe of the ſame Plea to perſecute their Brethren. This is the chief Argument the French Clergy uſed for Dragooning of Proteſtants: And the main Topick of our late Perſecutors was, that the Diſſenters were obſtinate and peeviſh, in not complying in things they judged indifferent. If ſuch Reaſoners are in earneſt, it ſhews the height of Pride, Preſumption, and Self-conceit, in ſuppoſing their Reaſon the Standard of all others; and that none can differ from them, without being guilty of a moſt criminal Inconſideration. In a word; Since the Magiſtrate cannot know whether a Man has or has not impartially conſidered, to puniſh him upon that Account is manifeſtly to uſurp that Authority that can belong only to the Diſcerner of Hearts: The moſt he can pretend to, (were this Matter under his Cogniſance) is to oblige thoſe he thinks have not impartially conſidered, to read the Reaſons, or hear unprejudiced and judicious Perſons argue the Matter on both Sides; any thing more than this is evident Injuſtice, and is nothing elſe than endeavouring to make Men act againſt their Conſciences.

10. Ano-

10. Another thing Perſecutors agree in is, an Endeavour to diſguiſe their Cruelty in the ſofteſt Terms imaginable, which ſhews that the thing it ſelf is ſo very odious, that themſelves are aſhamed of it. The Inquiſitors, when they deliver over to the Secular Magiſtrate thoſe they condemn to be burnt, they intreat him after this manner;

Domine Judex rogamus vos cum omni affectu quo poſſimus, ut amore Dei, pietatis, & miſericordiæ intuitu, & noſtrorum interventu precaminum, miſerrimo huic nullum mortis vel mutilationis periculum inferatis. And the French Tormentors, tho they highly condemn the Cruelty of the Inquiſition, yet they as much extol their own good-natur'd Tyrant for reclaiming Heretieks by Methods full of Mercy, Gentleneſs, and Sweetneſs. And our late Perſecutors, tho they abhorred the Deviliſh Cruelty of the French Dragooners, yet they greatly magnified the Moderation and Gentleneſs of the Penal Laws, and wondred any ſhould be ſo diſingenuous as to diſlike them; which yet, with ſubmiſſion, equalled, if not exceeded thoſe of *France* they ſo much exclaimed againſt. To mention no other than thoſe made in the 23, 27, and 35 of *Elizabeth*; which indeed are ſo very moderate, that they extend only to the loſs of Eſtate, Coun-

try, Liberty and Life. And Bp *Burnet*, in his Preface to *Lactantius*, very juſtly tells thoſe Hypocrites, that they let themſelves looſe to the Rage of a mad Perſecution; and adds, (a moſt charitable Advice) That they ought ſeriouſly to profeſs their Repentance of this Fury, in Inſtances that may be as viſible and legible, as their Rage has been publick and deſtructive.

But ſince the Proteſtants are forced to condemn the Severities the Papiſts uſe, they have no way to juſtify their own Penalties, but by pretending they are ſo very gentle and moderate, that they will not have thoſe ill Effects the others produce; that is, they will not cauſe Men to play the Hypocrites, nor prejudice or bias their Judgments, nor even deſtroy their Charity, by cauſing them to hate their Perſecutors. But,

Puniſhment may be reckoned ſevere, either upon the Account of the Length or Greatneſs of it.

11. As to the firſt; If a Man is to continue all his Life under any Puniſhment, tho in it ſelf but moderate; or which is all one, can ſee no hopes of Redreſs, without ruining his Soul, that Puniſhment is certainly ſevere. And ſince Men are not always alike upon their Guard, but the World is more apt to make an Impreſſion at one time than at another, there is a very great Danger, that

that some time or other they may be tempted to free themselves by a guilty Compliance. Who was more ready to lay down his Life for our Saviour, than St. *Peter?* Yet his Zeal was not constant, for we find him capable of Fear to the last degree, so as to deny his Master with Oaths and Curses, when there was no other Punishment for those that believed in Christ, but turning them out of the Synagogue. Nay, at another time, he shamefully complied with the Jews to the drawing aside of many; and this at *Antioch*, where the Jews had no Civil Power. And if so great a Person could be so easily wrought on, who can be secure when he lieth under constant Temptations? And he who considers, that of the twelve Disciples one denied his Master for fear, and another denied him for a paltry Sum of Money, will not wonder that Punishments and Rewards, tho not excessive, may have too great an Influence on others.

As to the second; Perpetual Imprisonment, and little less than Outlawry, which are the inseparable Consequences of Excommunication, are severe in themselves, as well as upon the Account of the Length of them, which can scarce fail some time or other so to affect Men, as to make them desire their Liberty, tho at the Price of their Consciences: And yet your Protestant Persecutors,

for all their Pretences to Moderation, would be as loth as the Papiſts their Excommunications ſhould be without them.

As to puniſhing People in their Properties, conſidering the almoſt infinite Variety of Mens Circumſtances, there can ſcarce be any Fines or Mulcts ſo ſmall, but the conſtant paying of them muſt ruin great Numbers, and be grievous to many more. There's nothing can well be more moderate, than the Price that Chriſtians pay for Liberty of Conſcience under the Mahometans; yet to avoid that, great Numbers of them turn Muſſulmen.

In a word; There is no ſuch thing as Moderate Penalties in any perſecuting Proteſtant Country: And conſidering Mens Tempers, how much ſooner ſome than other will be wrought on by Puniſhment, or loſing ſome temporal Advantage, it's impoſſible to ſay what degree of Force will not make ſome act againſt their Conſcience, and prejudice others in their choice of Religion, and deſtroy the Charity of moſt, ſince there's no where that Brotherly Love and Friendſhip between different Sects, where Perſecution prevails, as the Goſpel requires, or as there is where they tolerate one another. And where there is a Man whom Force will not cauſe to act againſt his Conſcience, or prejudice his Judgment, or

deſtroy

deſtroy his Charity, it cannot be preſumed but that the Thoughts of future Rewards and Puniſhments have made ſo religious a Perſon impartially conſider; ſo that the puniſhing him, tho but moderately, would be very unjuſt.

12. And yet if the Magiſtrate has a Right to uſe Force, to make People profeſs what Religion he judgeth to be true, that degree of Force ought to be uſed that is moſt effectual to that End, becauſe where the End is a Duty, the Means that are moſt conducive to it muſt be ſo too. Now it's evident, a greater Degree will cauſe Men to profeſs, where a leſs will not; and conſequently the greater Degree will have the greateſt Effect. Beſides, what can the Magiſtrate do if Men will ſtill go on in a conſtant Defiance to his Laws, to aſſert Opinions he judgeth do diſhonour God, or not aſſert others that do honour him? muſt he not at laſt come to capital Puniſhments, except he will ſee God continually diſhonoured? And if meer Opinions are of that fatal Conſequence to the Souls of Men, (as Perſecutors pretend) it's the higheſt Charity that can be, to deſtroy all Promoters of ſuch pernicious Opinions; for is it not better that a few (and thoſe too hated of God) ſhould be cut off, rather than they ſhould deſtroy the Souls of a great many, (for who knows

where ſuch Opinions will ſtop?) not only of the preſent, but of ſucceeding Generations? ſo that here's no room for Clemency: For how can the Life of a Man counterpoiſe the loſs of a Soul? And ſince nothing can, at leaſt ſo certainly, root out ſuch Opinions, as putting the Profeſſors of them to Death, is it not the higheſt Charity to the Souls of others to ſerve them ſo? Nay, it's more for the Safety and Intereſt of a Nation, that a few ſhould be deſtroyed upon the Account of Religion, than that great Numbers by leſſer Puniſhments, which ſuffers them to encreaſe, ſhould be grieved and provoked; which muſt neceſſarily create Diſturbances, Tumults, Wars, *&c.* Nay, ſuch proceeding will be the occaſion of the Death of more People; as it was here in the late Perſecutions, where more were ſtarved, or otherwiſe died in noiſom Priſons, than what are deſtroyed in the like Proportion of Time, where the Inquiſition is eſtabliſhed. And how little it's able to bring People to a Uniformity, may be judged from *Charles* the Firſt's Time, where the Church was ſo far from rooting out the different Sects by Puniſhments, and thoſe too not very moderate, that thoſe Methods were the Ruin of the perſecuting Church; ſo that in reſpect of the good of Men, as well as the Honour of God, all Sectaries, if they are not to be

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ſet wholly at Liberty, are to be quite rooted out, for all middle Ways are both abſurd and unſafe.

CHAP. IV.

Object. *That the Magiſtrate has a Right to uſe Force, to prevent the Increaſe of thoſe Erroneous Opinions that a Toleration would produce.*

Anſw. 1. IF Force prevents Men from running into Errors, it muſt be becauſe it hinders Men from freely and impartially examining Matters of Religion; which if Men would as freely do where Force is uſed, as where 'tis not, it could no ways hinder the ſuppoſed encreaſe of Errors, becauſe the not uſing it does no wiſe blind, nor the uſing it enlighten Mens Underſtandings. And as Error, where impartial Diligence is uſed, is wholly innocent; ſo where it's neglected, the accidental ſtumbling on Truth will not juſtify or excuſe the neglect of it: Therefore if it ſhould tend to hinder Error, by preventing Men from impartially conſidering, it would not give the Magiſtrate a Right to uſe Force. But how can Force,

in the Hands of Men as liable to be miſtaken as thoſe they uſe it on, contribute to hinder Mens falling into Error? There may perhaps be more Errors in a Country where there is Liberty of Conſcience, but not more in Error, becauſe it's more than probable, (as I ſhall fully prove hereafter) that where Perſecution prevails, they are all unanimous in the Wrong. But where will the Magiſtrate, uſing Force, prevent Errors? only in that Place where the Perſecutor's particular Sect is eſtabliſhed; in all other Places it will as much ſerve to promote and immortalize them: So that except the Perſecutor can find out a way that only his Sect ſhall uſe Force, he cannot deny but that there are at leaſt a thouſand Arguments to one, even upon this Head, againſt the uſe of it. But,

2. A free Permiſſion from the Pulpit, or Preſs, for Men of different Opinions to propoſe their Reaſons to the People, that they may ſearch into them in order to diſcern the Truth, is ſo far from being the way to maintain and propagate Falſhood, that it's the only way to deſtroy it; except we will ſay, That tho God has given us Faculties to judg of Truth and Falſhood, and has commanded us to make uſe of them in order to find the Truth, yet the more we do ſo, the further we ſhall be from diſcovering it. To

hinder

hinder Men from doing this, on pretence they would be led into Error by it, what is it but to make our ſelves wiſer than God, and in effect to ſay, he is miſtaken in the Method he has propoſed to us for our diſcovering the Truth? Therefore, ſay the Perſecutors, let us keep the People in Ignorance of any Opinion but our own, for fear leſt when they come to underſtand the different Opinions, and the Reaſons that make for one ſide as well as the other, they ſhould be unqualified to judg of them.

3. It may be ſaid, Upon ſuppoſition of this Liberty, Opinions, tho never ſo abſurd, may be publiſhed. But if every one is to judg for himſelf, he ought not to rely upon another's Judgment, but examine himſelf whether they are ſo or not; and it's probable that they that are againſt this Freedom, maintain ſuch Opinions: for the more they are afraid of having their Opinions examined, the more abſurd it's likely they are; and the more any Opinion is grounded in Reaſon, the more willing the Profeſſors of it are to have it undergo the Teſt; it's only thoſe with flaws in them, that (like crackt Titles) cannot bear a Scrutiny. If the *Bereans* were for ever enobled by St. *Paul* for not relying on what he ſaid, (tho he had the Power of Miracles to confirm his Doctrin) but for trying whether thoſe things he affirmed

firmed were ſo or not; there's certainly as much reaſon now to do it, otherwiſe we are Slaves where we ought to be moſt free, in our nobleſt Part, our Underſtanding: And if in all other Matters, the more any thing is ſcanned, the more the ſtrength of thoſe Reaſons appears that make for Truth, as well as the weakneſs of thoſe that are pleaded in behalf of Error; Why ſhould it not be ſo in Matters of Religion, ſince we muſt judg of their Truth and Falſhood, as we do of all other things, by their Agreement or Diſagreement with our common Notions, eſpecially conſidering Religion is no obſcure and unintelligible thing, but ſo plain and eaſy, that it's ſuted to the Capacity of the Simple and Ignorant, the Bulk of Mankind?

It's to me wondrous ſtrange, that any ſhould have ſo ill an Opinion of the Reaſonableneſs of the true Religion, or elſe of the Impotency of thoſe Rational Faculties God has given Men on purpoſe to judg of Religion, as to ſuppoſe they would not prefer it (were they not prejudiced by temporal Motives) before the Inventions of Men.

It's ſaid, the Affectation of Singularity and Novelty is apt to cauſe a Man (if the Magiſtrate by Force does not reſtrain him) to wander from the true Religion,

But

But what Charms can there be, in being thought not only ignorant and mistaken, but also despised and hated, as he too certainly is, that differs in his Sentiments from his Neighbours? And therefore it's not only a sign that a Man thinks of Religion, but that he is very hearty and sincere in it, when he exposeth himself to a constant Disgrace and Disrepute by it; for there's not one of a thousand that's stiff and insensible enough to bear the perpetual dislike of his Neighbours, and those he is forc'd to converse with: And therefore there's no need of Force to make Men profess the Publick Religion, which (for no other Reason but because it is so) they are too apt to do. Hence it is, that not only the Careless and Negligent, but the Immoral and Vicious, are generally of the Religion established by Law, where they can best indulge their Vices, as having the Countenance of the People, and the Favour and Indulgence of the Magistrate.

5. Another Argument they usually urge is, that Mens Lusts and Passions would make them prefer false Religions before the true, had not the Magistrate a Right to hinder them by Force. But not to mention, that since the Magistrates are as much governed, as their Subjects can be supposed to be, by their Lusts and Passions, Force in their

their Hands will more likely promote than hinder falſe Religions; I anſwer, As to the meerly religious, or ſpeculative Points of the true Religion, Mens Luſts or Paſſions, ſince theſe are no way concerned how thoſe are held, do not encline them to prefer Falſhood before Truth. And as for thoſe Parts of Religion wherein Mens Luſts and Paſſions may be ſuppoſed to ſway them, thoſe I own (as far forth as my Adverſaries) do belong to the Magiſtrate's Juriſdiction, and all Men, for the ſake of their common Good, are obliged to get them believed and practiſed; for it's equally the Intereſt of Governours and Governed, to embrace the true Religion, contrived by the infinite Wiſdom of God for the Benefit of Mankind: For God, as he could not envy his Creatures any Enjoyment they are capable of, ſo he has forbad them nothing but what naturally tends to their Ruin and Deſtruction; and were it not for Perſecution, and thoſe Opinions ſupported by it, which intereſted Men have tack'd to the Chriſtian Religion, there can be no doubt but that it had long before now been the Univerſal Profeſſion of Mankind.

6. As a free and impartial Liberty is the only way to promote Truth, ſo where Perſecution prevails, it's morally impoſſible but that Error, Ignorance, aud Superſtition

tion muſt do ſo too; becauſe Men when they are hindred from exerciſing their Reaſon, by being forced blindly to follow the Opinions of others, become ignorant and ſuperſtitious, and are apt to take any abſurd Impreſſions: And the Prieſts themſelves, where they are ſure of the Force of the Magiſtrate to make People profeſs what they pleaſe, will not much trouble themſelves about Reaſons and Arguments; and conſequently by degrees grow very ignorant and ſuperſtitious, as we find it in *Spain*, *Italy*, *Portugal*, and other Popiſh Places where the Inquiſition is ſettled; tho in *France* (where till of late more Liberty has been allowed) they have not for the generality been ſo groſly ignorant. It's very true what a late Author obſerves, That the Miniſtry is more learned, more diligent, and more exemplary, where a Government carries it ſelf equally to the different Parties, than if one Party being abſolute Maſters, ſhould therefore (ſo much is Human Frailty more apt to be corrupted by Proſperity than by all other Snares together) abandon it ſelf to Licentiouſneſs, Ignorance, Idleneſs, and Superſtition. And this holds not only in Popiſh but Proteſtant Countries; alſo in which the leſs there is of Liberty, the more Error, Ignorance, and Superſtition abounds.

7. Beſides,

7. Beſides, when Men ſhall be hindred from profeſſing any Doctrin but what the Prieſts in their Convocations ſhall decree, will not theſe be tempted to eſtabliſh ſuch Opinions as ſhall tend to promote their own Power and Dominion, tho to the deſtruction of true Piety? And this is no ſtrange Suppoſition, conſidering how fond in general Mankind are to advance their own Power and Authority. And do not the Proteſtant Clergy own that Popery is nothing but a Politick Deſign to advance the Power of the Clergy under the Biſhop of *Rome*, tho to the Ruin of Chriſtianity? But as *Rome* it ſelf was not built in a Day, ſo it was not but by a long, ſteady and uniform Deſign for many Ages, that the Clergy by degrees arrived to ſuch a Power. And it's ſufficiently evident, that long before the Pope uſurped ſuch Superiority over the reſt of the Clergy, they were carrying on the Deſign of aggrandizing themſelves, and tyrannizing over thoſe they call the *Laity*. In a word; It has been the Pride, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs of the Prieſts, and the Force and Violence that by their Means and Inſtigation the perſecuting Magiſtrates have uſed on the People to make them pay a blind Submiſſion to the Decrees of the Clergy, that has been the Cauſe, not only of all the Miſchief and Miſeries that upon the

the account of Religion have happened in Chriſtendom, but of the great Corruption of Religion; which being a thing ſo plain and eaſy in it ſelf, and ſuted to the Capacity of the People, would never have been ſo much and ſo univerſally depraved, had there been an entire Liberty of Conſcience: for tho upon ſeveral Accounts, ſuch as Prejudice of Education, miſtaken Philoſophy, Intereſt, *&c.* Errors might have crept into the Church, yet had they not been eſtabliſhed by Penal Laws, there would have been ſome in all Ages, who not being under the like Prejudices, would have oppoſed them; and conſequently upon a free Examination, Error could not long have withſtood the Power of Truth.

Luther, Calvin, &c. were more ſucceſsful than others, (who before them ſaw the Corruptions the Clergy had introduced) only becauſe they had better Fortune in meeting with Princes that allow'd them a Liberty that was denied to the others.

10. One of the chiefeſt Means of corrupting Religion, was occaſioned by the Heathen Philoſophers, thoſe Pretenders to Science, falſly ſo called; who when they thought it worth their while (tho few or none of them at firſt were converted) to come into the Church, and became Governours and leading Men in it, brought in with them (ſo hard

hard it is to conquer the Prejudice of Education) their abſurd Metaphyſical Notions, wholly inconſiſtent with the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel, which they wreſted to their preconceived Opinions; and being then unwilling to make a meaner Figure, upon the account of their Learning, than they did formerly, they blended together two very different things, Chriſtianity, and that vain Philoſophy St. *Paul* ſo much cautions People againſt. And they that ſucceeded them, made it their Buſineſs to render Religion more and more myſterious and unintelligible, that the Laity ſhould admire them for their profound Knowledg in things paſt their own underſtanding, and be wholly governed by them in Matters of Religion, as being above their Apprehenſions; and ſo get their Conſciences, and conſequently their Eſtates in their diſpoſal. Which Deſign ſucceeded accordingly, for we find that it was wholly left to them to make what Creeds, impoſe what Opinions they thought fit on the Laity; who, whenever they aſſerted their Natural Right of judging for themſelves, and acting according to that Judgment, were by the Magiſtrate's Sword (always ready) forc'd to a Compliance. Thus it was that Prieſt-craft began, and Perſecution compleated the Ruin of Religion. And if this was the Method

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the Clergy took in the moſt early Times, what reaſon is there to ſuſpect, that in theſe latter Times they are leſs in love with Power and Dominion?

9. It's ſaid, That the Magiſtrate's Force is neceſſary to preſerve Religion; becauſe for want of it the World was quickly and univerſally overrun with Idolatry.

I anſwer; A Right in the Magiſtrates to uſe Force, would in no wiſe have prevented Idolatry, except they had been againſt it when the People were inclined to it; which was ſo far from being true, that the Kings themſelves (as that great and good Man, the Author of the Letters concerning *Toleration*, plainly ſhows) were the Promoters of Idolatry, by introducing their Predeceſſors into the Divine Worſhip of the People, to ſecure to themſelves, as deſcended from the Gods, the greater Veneration from their Subjects; and therefore erected ſuch a Worſhip, and ſuch a Prieſthood, as might awe the ſeduced Multitude into the Obedience they deſired.

And it's much more probable, that Courts by their Inſtruments the Prieſts, and by their Artifices, the Fables of their Gods, their Myſteries and Oracles, ſhould thus advance the Honour of their Kings amongſt the People, for the Ends of Ambition and Power, than that the People ſhould find out

thoſe refined Ways of doing it, and introduce them into Courts for enſlaving themſelves. And it's no wonder that Abſolute and Arbitrary Monarchs (as the firſt Introducers of Idolatry were) could impoſe what they pleaſed on their Subjects, bred up in Slavery, (and conſequently in Ignorance); for where Men are poor and miſerable, (the neceſſary Conſequence of Arbitrary Power) they have no leiſure to examine into Matters of Religion, their Time being wholly taken up in providing neceſſary Subſiſtence; and conſequently they muſt be groſly ignorant, and have mean, low, and abject Thoughts ſutable to their Condition: So that 'tis not ſtrange that theſe Emperors might by degrees impoſe on them the worſhipping their Anceſtors, eſpecially when they ſaw the Prieſts and Courtiers ſcarce forbear adoring the preſent Monarch; which is almoſt unavoidable in Arbitrary Governments, (witneſs the moſt fulſome and blaſphemous Flatteries that are offered up to the French King, even by his Chriſtian Subjects). Nay, how many Inſtances have we of ſuch Monarchs, whoſe Impatience would not permit them to ſtay till after their Death for Divine Honours, which then Cuſtom had in a manner made their Right? And,

10. One,

10. One (and not perhaps the leaſt) Reaſon why the generality of the Prieſts are for preaching up abſolute Arbitrary Power to be *Jure Divino*, is, becauſe that neceſſarily cauſes an Univerſal Ignorance, and thereby gives them a fair Opportunity of impoſing on the People what they think fit: For Ignorance, tho it's far from being the Mother of Devotion to God, it's certainly ſo to the Church, as the Prieſts call themſelves; and therefore there is nothing they dread more than a knowing Laity: and to ſhow all the Arts and Methods they have taken to keep them ignorant, would require a large Hiſtory. And we find that in thoſe Places where the Clergy are moſt numerous, potent and rich, the People are moſt ignorant and ſuperſtitious, as well as moſt enſlaved; and where the Clergy are feweſt in Number, Religion abounds moſt as well as Knowledg and Liberty. It was *Piedmont*, and ſome ſuch barren Places, which could not well maintain many Prieſts, and where it was ſcarce worth their while to advance Prieſt-craft, that beſt preſerved the Purity of the Goſpel. And not to go ſo far from home, as nothing made way ſo much for the Reformation as the depriving the Prieſts of their Monaſteries, and other ill-gotten Goods; ſo nothing has ſince contributed more to the continuing of it, than

thoſe Poſſeſſions being out of their Hands. And the Method by which they have generally corrupted Religion, is by wheedling or forcing the People into a blind Submiſſion to what they impoſe on them. And it was by theſe Artifices that the Jewiſh Prieſts and Rabbies impoſed on that Nation the Traditions of Men for the Commandments of God. And it's by this Method that the Mahometan Religion ſupports it ſelf, there being no Debate nor Diſcourſe allowed of what the Mufties ſhall teach the People. And every body knows that the forcing People into an implicit Faith, is the Bulwark of the Popiſh Religion.

And now having anſwered, and (I think I may ſay) retorted the Arguments for Compulſion, upon pretence of advancing the true Religion, I ſhall next examine what is ſaid for it upon a Civil Account; but before I do that, I muſt beg leave to ſhow, (ſince it's for Proteſtants this Diſcourſe is chiefly deſigned)

Firſt, That this Doctrine of Compulſion is inconſiſtent with the very Foundation of the Proteſtant Religion. And,

Secondly, To lay down the true Method, conſonant to Proteſtant Principles, of doſtroying (maugre all the Differences of Opinions) not only Schiſms and Hereſies, but all Hatred and Uncharitableneſs, and bringing People

People to true Chriſtian Love and Friendſhip, which will in a manner prevent all that can be urged for Compulſion upon a Civil Account.

CHAP. V.

That all Force upon the Account of meer Religion, is inconſiſtent with the Principles of the Proteſtant Religion.

1. AS it was Perſecution that advanced Popery, ſo it was Freedom and Toleration that ruined it, and eſtabliſhed Proteſtantiſm; the Eſſence of which conſiſts in every one's having an impartial Right to judg for himſelf, and which is the neceſſary Conſequence of it, acting according to that Judgment: And therefore, as a very worthy Perſon ſaith, A Perſecutor is no where at Home but at *Rome*. The Papiſts in perſecuting, act conſiſtent with their own Principles: But Proteſtants, whilſt they perſecute any, condemn themſelves. The former pretend there are Doubts and Difficulties in all, even the moſt important Points of Religion; and therefore there muſt be (ſay they) ſome ultimate and external Judg to appeal to, by whoſe deciſive Judgment

all Perſons muſt be concluded, otherwiſe ſo many Men ſo many Minds, and the Church will be filled with Controverſy and Confuſion.

The Proteſtants on the contrary ſay, That God has appointed no ſuch Judg, but that every one is to judg for himſelf, and to act according to that Judgment: And therefore, ſince they judged the Terms of Communion with the Church of *Rome* unlawful, they acted according to their Duty in ſeparating from it, and in forming Religious Aſſemblies of their own, and endeavouring to make as many Converts as they could: And that they were obliged to do this when the Government was againſt them, as well as when it was for them, in Q. *Mary*'s Days as well as Q. *Elizabeth*'s; according to the practice of the Primitive Chriſtians, who held their Religious Aſſemblies contrary to the Commands of the Heathen Government. Grant me theſe Principles, or by any other juſtify the Reformation if you can, and ſhew me then how any Man, or Body of Men, can pretend to judg for others, and by Force endeavour to make them profeſs their Sentiments. Nay, can the perſecuting Proteſtants any otherwiſe juſtify themſelves againſt the Church of *Rome*, but by the very ſame Arguments their Brethren (who

deſire

deſire but the ſame Liberty from them that they claim from the Papiſts) make their Defence with, againſt whom they can alledg no other Reaſons than the Papiſts uſe againſt all of them? than which there can be nothing more diſingenuous. And what is it but mocking both God and Man, firſt to bid Men uſe their Reaſon in Matters of Religion, then puniſh them if they will not act contrary to it? To tell them they muſt judg for themſelves, and act according to that Judgment, and yet excommunicate, impriſon, and fine them for ſo doing, is a moſt fulſome Contradiction. With what Face can the Clergy tell their Hearers, that they ought not to take things on truſt, but impartially examine the Reaſons on all ſides, and yet make it their Buſineſs to hinder the preaching or printing of any thing but what makes for their own Side? The Author of the *Perſwaſive* to an ingenuous Trial of Opinions in Religion ſaith, (*Pag.* 28.) "They that have a good Cauſe, need no "diſingenuous Arts; they will not fright "Men from conſidering what their Adver-"ſaries ſay, by denouncing Damnation a-"gainſt them; nor forbid them to read "their Books, but rather encourage them "to do ſo, that they may ſee the Dif-"ference between Truth and Error, be-"tween Reaſon and Sophiſtry, with their

"own Eyes. This is the Effect of a well-
"grounded Confidence in Truth; and there
"is this Sign of a good Cauſe apparently diſ-
"cernable in the Application of the Clergy
"of this Church both to their Friends and
"Enemies, they deſire the one and the other
"to conſider impartially what is ſaid for us
"and againſt us; And whatſoever Guides
"of a Party do otherwiſe, they give juſt
"cauſe to thoſe that follow them to examine
"their Doctrines ſo much the more careful-
"ly, by how much they are more unwilling
"to have them examined. It's a bad Sign,
"when Men are loth to have their Opinions
"ſeen in the Day, but love Darkneſs rather
"than Light.

Whether this laſt does not agree to that Church which endeavours to hinder any thing from being preached or printed that is not of their own Side, as well as to the Church of *Rome*; or with what Conſcience he could make ſuch a Panegyrick on that Church, whoſe Perſecution in that very Book he attempts to juſtify, let the Reader judg. And it would be very diverting (were it not on ſuch a Subject) to obſerve the miſerable Shifts the Clergy make to condemn the Practice of the Popiſh Church, and at the ſame time to juſtify their own, which, as well as the Papiſts, claims a Legiſlative and Coercive Power in Matters of meer Religion.

2. But

2. But they ſay, The Papiſts forbid the People from reading the Scripture, and thereby hinder them from judging for themſelves.

To which I anſwer: Which is worſe, to give Men leave, by reading the Scripture, to judg for themſelves, and then uſe Force to make them act contrary to their Judgments, or to make them follow their Guides with a blind implicit Faith? The one tends to make Men ignorant and ſuperſtitious, the other down-right Hypocrites and Villains: if Men were above Force, they would neither blindly follow their pretended Guides, nor act againſt their Conſciences. But however both Papiſts and Proteſtants uſe the Means that naturally tend to effect theſe wicked Ends.

Beſides, I ask theſe Proteſtant Perſecutors, whether they think the reading of the Scripture alone, without hearing or reading ſome learned Men of their Party, ſufficient to make them underſtand the controverted Points? If they own they ought to hear them, why not the oppoſite Side? If they were to hear neither, they would be more likely to form a true Judgment, than to hear the ſtudied and elaborate Arguments on one Side only. If the People are not to be truſted to hear all that can be ſaid on all Sides, for fear of taking a different Opinion from

from the licenſed Guides, why ſhall they be more truſted with reading the Scriptures, which they may apprehend in a Senſe different from that of their Guides? except you ſay, that as long as theſe alone have the interpreting of it, and have the Force of the Magiſtrate on their Side, they may impoſe what Opinion they pleaſe on the People.

In ſhort, did the Prieſts of any Proteſtant Party act conſiſtent with their own Principles, and had a mind that the People ſhould not blindly follow them, they would be ſo far from hindering them (by reſtraining the Liberty of the Preſs and Pulpit) from examining the Reaſonableneſs of thoſe Opinions that are contrary to theirs, that they would make it their Buſineſs to perſwade them to it, and obtain an entire Liberty for their Adverſaries to preach and print what they think good.

3. It was the Proteſtant Prieſts acting moſt apparently, and moſt ſhamefully inconſiſtent with themſelves, that put a ſudden ſtop to the Reformation, which at firſt, like a mighty Torrent, overturned all that oppoſed it: And here it is that the Church of *Rome* inſults, and ſaith, That the Principles of the Proteſtants, by which they endeavour to juſtify their Separation from her, are ſo abſurd, that themſelves are obliged to act contrary to them, and do the very ſame

ſame things they condemn in her. Thus the Perſecution of the Popiſh Church has been kept in Countenance by the Proteſtants following her Example, which otherwiſe would have appeared ſo odious, that all muſt have abhorred her for it, or elſe obliged her to grant that Liberty which would infallibly ruin her.

4. As Perſecution was the chief Cauſe of hindering the further ſpreading of the Reformation, ſo to that we muſt impute that this was not more perfect and compleat. For tho the firſt Reformers deſerve very great Commendation for what they did, yet it cannot be imagined, that being bred up in Popiſh Darkneſs and Superſtition, they ſhould be able to diſcern, much leſs remove all thoſe Corruptions that had been ſo long a gathering, (that could only be the Work of Time, or Men inſpired); and therefore it's no wonder there were ſo many different Opinions amongſt them at firſt. But had thoſe that ſucceeded them, inſtead of paying a blind implicit Submiſſion to their Decrees, and getting them eſtabliſhed by Penal Laws, taken the ſame Liberty in examining their Opinions as the Reformers did their Predeceſſors, all Differences, at leaſt of any moment, would in ſome Time have been compoſed; which became impoſſible by the Clergy, being obliged (as they valued

lued their ſubſiſtence) to aſſert ſuch Opinions, right or wrong, as were eſtabliſhed by Law, and by Perſecution cauſing ſuch Animoſities and Prejudices amongſt the different Sects, that inſtead of examining one anothers Opinions ſincerely and impartially, they ran daily further into Ignorance, Superſtition, Narrowneſs and Uncharitableneſs.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Method to deſtroy not only Schiſms and Hereſies, but Hatred and Uncharitableneſs amongſt Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their different Opinions.

BUT ſuppoſe few or none of the different Opinions that are amongſt Proteſtants, had been compoſed by their acting conſiſtent with their own Principles; yet there could not well be any Diviſions or Schiſms amongſt them, which do wholly ariſe from that Antiproteſtant and impious Practice in impoſing on others our own uncertain and dubious Comments as neceſſary Terms of Communion, and requiring People to profeſs them on pain of Temporal or Eternal Puniſhment; which is nothing leſs than

than making our own Opinions of Divine Authority, and as neceſſary to Salvation as the expreſs words of the Scripture; which if Men did only make uſe of in any controverted Point in the publick Forms of Worſhip, they might be of the ſame Communion for all their variety of Opinions. And indeed nothing ſeems more abſurd, than that inſtead of the Expreſſions the infinite Wiſdom of God thought fit to make uſe of, Men ſhould be ſo zealous for impoſing on their Brethren their own Conceits, eſpecially of things they confeſs to be inconceivable, and their own Explications of what they acknowledg to be inexplicable, and their own Reaſon of what they own is above their Reaſon, and their own meaning of what they confeſs their Words cannot reach the meaning.

But it's no wonder that they that make themſelves wiſer than God in contriving Methods, even oppoſite to thoſe he requires, to make Men embrace the Faith, ſhould think themſelves better able to expreſs that Faith than God himſelf, and therefore condemn thoſe as Hereticks who declare their Belief in the Terms of Truth, except alſo they will admit their Expreſſions and Terms, from which it's by no means lawful to vary; which ſhows that they put a greater value on them, than on the Divine Word.

2. To

2. To this they ſay, they oblige People to uſe their Expreſſions in order to diſcover Hereticks.

But if God requires no more of a Chriſtian than that he believes the Scripture, and endeavours to find out the true Senſe of it, and to live according to it; he that does this can be in no fault, but is to all intents and purpoſes as ſafe in reſpect to his Eternal Happineſs as if he were infallible, and conſequently is far from being a Schiſmatick or Heretick. Tho the Impoſers are not only Schiſmaticks, by cauſing a needleſs Separation, but Hereticks by their own definition of Hereſy, which is erring in Fundamentals, and erring obſtinately againſt Knowledg; becauſe when they have determined the Holy Scriptures to be the only foundation of Faith, nevertheleſs they lay down certain Propoſitions as Fundamental that are not in the Scripture; which is declaring againſt their own Principles, and deſtroying the very Foundation they have laid: ſo that inſtead of finding out others to be Hereticks, they make themſelves ſuch by requiring a Divine Faith to their own imagined Deductions; which how clear ſoever they ſeem to themſelves to be drawn from Scripture, appear quite contrary to others. If a King going a far Journey, ſhould give certain Injunctions to his Subjects,

and

and appoint no Judg to determine any Diſpute that ſhould happen about interpreting them, but that every one according to the beſt of his Skill ſhould judg for himſelf, and not act until he was fully perſwaded in his own Mind; Would not they that do this, how much ſoever they were miſtaken in interpreting his Injunctions, have done all that he required? And would not he be juſtly enraged at his return to ſee them, for doing this, beaten and abuſed by their Fellow-Subjects? And what Reaſon therefore can there be urged why Chriſt ſhould deal otherwiſe, at his return to Judgment, with your perſecuting Heretick Starters, and reward thoſe Good and Faithful Servants (the ſuppoſed Hereticks) for following his Directions, in judging of his Will according to the beſt of their Abilities?

3. If the Predeſtinarians and Antipredeſtinarians, who condemn one anothers Tenets as moſt impious, may, and ought, notwithſtanding their different Sentiments, to continue in the ſame Church; or if the Orthodox can ſo infinitely differ in Matters of Faith, that one Party of them ſhall worſhip but one Infinite Almighty Being or Spirit, and another three ſuch, and yet be of the ſame Communion, and agree in the ſame Terms of Human Invention; Why may not all (ſince it's ſcarce poſſible any

ſhould

ſhould differ more widely) join together in the ſame Communion, if nothing be mentioned in thoſe Matters wherein they differ, but in Scripture-expreſſions, in which they all agree? And is it not the Impoſers, that not only in the Arminian Controverſy (which has cauſed a Schiſm in the Proteſtant Countries beyond Sea) but in all others, that are guilty of the Separation? "For I do "not ſee (as that very Honeſt and Judicious Man Mr. *Hales*, in his Tract of Schiſm, obſerves) "That *Opinionum varietas & Opinantium unitas* are ασυσκατα, or that "Men of different Opinions may not hold "Communion *in Sacris*, or both go to the "ſame Church. Why may not I go, if "occaſion requires, to an Arian Church, ſo "there be no Arianiſm expreſſed in their "Liturgy? and were Liturgies and publick "Forms of Service ſo framed as they admitted no particular and private Fancies, "but contained thoſe things in which all "Chriſtians agree, Schiſms on Opinions were "utterly vaniſhed. And let me add, that not only Schiſms or Hereſies, but all Hatred, Animoſities, and Uncharitableneſs would be deſtroyed: For then the Clergy, ſince it would be their common Intereſt to unite together, would maintain Peace, Love, and Kindneſs amongſt themſelves, and preach the ſame to the People, who would never

never, were they but left to themſelves, hate, or moleſt one another for meerly ſpeculative Opinions (which make but little impreſſion on them) eſpecially too, when they did not create any Diviſions or Schiſms amongſt them; nay, then all Opinions of Moment (I mean thoſe which Men cannot neglect examining into without a Fault) would, being handled without Prejudice or Paſſion, quickly be rightly underſtood; and thoſe of little or no Moment (which are chiefly kept up by the Hatred and Animoſities of the different Sects, and the Artifices of the Prieſts) ſoon fall to the Ground. And this is the ſenſe of the ableſt Champion that the Proteſtant Religion could ever boaſt of, the brave *Chillingworth*, who tells us, *Ch.* 3. *n.* 8. "If Men would be themſelves, "and be content that others ſhould be; "in the choice of their Religion, the Ser- "vants of God and not of Men; if in- "ſtead of being zealous Papiſts, earneſt "Calviniſts, rigid Lutherans, *&c.* they "would become themſelves, and be con- "tent that others ſhould be plain and ho- "neſt Chriſtians; if all Men would be- "lieve the Scripture, and freeing them- "ſelves from Prejudice and Paſſion, would "ſincerely endeavour to find the true Senſe "of it, and live according to it, and re- "quire no more of others than to do ſo,

" not refuſing their Communion to thoſe
" that do ſo, would ſo order their Publick
" Service of God, that all may, without
" Scruple, or Hypocriſy, or Proteſtation
" againſt any part of it, join with them
" in it; who does not ſee, that ſeeing all
" neceſſary Truths are plainly and evident-
" ly ſet down in Scripture, there would of
" neceſſity be amongſt all Men in all things
" neceſſary Unity of Opinion, and (notwith-
" ſtanding any other Differences that are or
" could be) Unity of Communion and Cha-
" rity, and mutual Toleration; by which
" Means all Schiſm and Hereſy would be
" baniſhed the World, and thoſe wretched
" Contentions which now rend and tear in
" pieces, not the Coat, but the Members
" and Bowels of Chriſt, with mutual Pride
" and Tyranny, would ſpeedily receive a
" moſt bleſſed Cataſtrophe. So, *Chap.* 4.
n. 16. " This preſumptuous impoſing of the
" Senſes of Men upon the Word of God,
" the ſpecial Senſes of Men upon the gene-
" ral Words of God, and laying them on
" Mens Conſciences, under the equal Penal-
" ty of Death and Damnation; this vain
" Conceit, that we can ſpeak of the Things
" of God, better than the Words of God;
" this deifying our own Interpretations,
" and tyrannous enforcing them upon o-
" thers; this reſtraining the Words of God
" from

" from that Latitude and Generality, and " the Underſtanding of Men from their Li- " berty, where Chriſt and his Apoſtles left " them, is and hath been the only Fountain " of all Schiſms of the Church; and that " which makes them immortal, the com- " mon Incendiary of Chriſtendom, *Riden- " te Turca, nec dolente Judæo.* Take away " theſe Walls of Separation, and all will " quickly be one: Take away this perſe- " cuting, burning, curſing, damning of " Men, for not ſubſcribing to the Words " of Men as the Words of God; require " of Chriſtians only to believe Chriſt, and " to call no Man *Maſter* but him only: " Let thoſe leave claiming Infallibility, that " have no Title to it; and let them that in " their Words diſclaim it, diſclaim it like- " wiſe in their Actions. In a word, Take " away Tyranny, which is the Devil's In- " ſtrument to ſupport Errors, Superſtitions, " and Impieties, in the ſeveral Parts of the " World, which could not otherwiſe long " withſtand the Power of Truth: I ſay, " take away Tyranny, and reſtore Chri- " ſtians to the juſt and full Liberty of cap- " tivating their Underſtanding to Scripture " only; and (as Rivers, when they have " a free paſſage, run all to the Ocean) ſo " it may well be hoped, by God's Bleſſing, " that Univerſal Liberty thus moderated,

" may quickly reduce Chriſtendom to " Truth and Unity.

But to add a greater Authority, even that of the Apoſtles themſelves; who tho they were to teach the People the Chriſtian Faith before they baptized them into it; nay, it's impoſſible any ſhould be of the Chriſtian Church, before he knew the Faith that muſt make him a Chriſtian; yet they required no more of thoſe that before believed the Unity of God, to qualify them to be Members of the Church, than to believe Jeſus to be the Chriſt, and that God has raiſed him from the Dead, and the Doctrine of Repentance: And upon this Belief which all Chriſtians profeſs, they conſtantly admitted both Jews and Gentiles into the Church; and conſequently whilſt this Belief remains, they are not unqualified to be Members of the Church, except Men have a Right now-a-days to diſown thoſe for Brethren and Members of the Church that the Apoſtles owned as ſuch. " But They are indeed (as Mr. " *Chillingworth* obſerveth) the greateſt " Schiſmaticks, who make the Way to " Heaven narrower, the Yoke of Chriſt " heavier, the Differences of Faith greater " than they were made at the beginning " by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; they talk " of Unity, and aim at Tyranny, and " will have Peace with none but their Slaves " and Vaſſals.

4. But

4. But it's ſaid; A Heretick, after two or three Admonitions, is to be rejected, or (more properly) avoided; therefore Difference of Opinions will hinder Men from being of the ſame Communion.

By a Heretick is not meant one that thrô the weakneſs of Underſtanding is in an Error, but an immoral Man that acts againſt his Conſcience, for the Apoſtle deſcribes him as one that's conſcious of his Crime, as being condemned of himſelf, on whom Admonitions might have a good Effect; or if they ſhould not be ſufficient, yet that the Trouble and Diſgrace of being ſhunned by his Brethren, might reclaim him; which Methods could have no ſuch Effect, if his Fault had been a meer Error of the Underſtanding: And Hereſy cannot but be a Fault of the Will, becauſe it's called *a Work of the Fleſh, and damnable*, which a meer Error of the Underſtanding by no means is: And if the Apoſtle had meant, that a ſimple erroneous Perſon was to be avoided, he would have contradicted himſelf, ſince (as it has been already proved) he requires ſuch a One to be born with.

5. But it's ſaid, We are bid (*Rom.*16.17.) to mark and avoid thoſe that cauſe Diviſions and Offences.

To which I anſwer, That bare differences of Opinions do not cauſe them; for what

two Men, even of the ſame Communion, agree in all Points of Divinity? No, it's Impoſition that has been the unhappy Occaſion of all the Offences, Schiſms, Diviſions, and Hereſies, that have confounded the Church. Beſides, it's plain, the Apoſtle does not ſpeak here of the meerly Erroneous, becauſe he ſays they are thoſe that ſerve not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly; and *Philip.* 3. where he renews the ſame Diſcourſe, he deſcribes them as Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt, *Whoſe end is Deſtruction, whoſe God is their Belly, who mind earthly Things.* A Character which generally agrees but too well with thoſe that are for Impoſition, who thereby cauſe Diviſions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine the Apoſtle taught them.

If Schiſm be (as it's pretended) ſo great a Crime, that every one that is guilty of it is out of the ordinary way of Salvation; what can be more Uncharitable and Impious, than to make ſo many things even of an indifferent Nature, neceſſary to Church-Communion, as tho it were on purpoſe to make Schiſmaticks?

6. In a word, To be ſhunned and avoided by every one as ſome Peſt or Plague, can be no ſmall Puniſhment to ſo ſociable a Creature as Man; and therefore none ought to be ſo puniſhed for an Error of the Underſtanding,

derſtanding, an involuntary thing, and no Fault at all, when alſo that Puniſhment does not tend to convince him of his Error, but to make him act againſt his Conſcience, and to cauſe Uncharitableneſs, and moſt of thoſe other pernicious Conſequences (tho not in ſo high a degree) that Force does. In a word, none can forfeit his Right to the civil Converſe and Familiarity of his Fellow Creatures, ſo that they ſhall combine together to avoid him, but by his being a Man of no Conſcience, or of ſuch Principles as engage him to break thoſe common Rules which tend to their mutual Happineſs, and thereby is become their common Enemy. And if Chriſtians would not act againſt the Light of Nature in doing as they would not be done unto, they ought to give to all Men (how different ſoever their Religion may be) the ſame Freedom of Judging and Acting according to their Judgment as they would deſire from them, and impoſe no more on them than they would be willing to ſuffer themſelves were they in their Power; and require no more of their own People who have the ſame Rule of Faith, than to endeavour to find out the true meaning of it, and to live up to it; and of their Clergy, than their beſt Diligence to diſcover the true Senſe of it, and their Sincerity in inſtructing others in it.

7. Without this Freedom it's morally impoſſible but that the Clergy muſt be the chief Promoters, not only of Schiſms and Hereſies, but of Uncharitableneſs, Envy, Strife, Fewds and Factions; ſince not only their Intereſt, but the Method of their Education enclines them thereto. For Men that are bred in the World, as they every Day meet with variety of Opinions, ſo they can with eaſe ſee others differ from them, and freely give them the ſame Liberty they take themſelves: On the contrary, they that are educated (as the Clergy are) in Cloiſters or Colleges, where they come not to examine the Truth of ſuch Opinions as are eſtabliſhed by Law, but to profeſs them as a Trade they are to get their Living by, and conſequently are all as to thoſe Matters of the ſame Opinion, when they come into the World, and ſet up for Teachers, they cannot bear ſo unuſual a thing as the leaſt oppoſition; whereas were they left to themſelves to examine things in their own Minds, and after this to profeſs what they judg to be Truth; this would teach them Patience, Modeſty, and Humility, by ſhowing how ſubject, not only themſelves, but even the moſt Celebrated are to be miſtaken; and that nothing diſcovers Truth like a free and ſincere examination; and conſequently they muſt abhor any Reſtraint

ſtraint to the freedom of judging. That this different way of Education has as different Effects on the Minds of Men, is ſo very evident, that you will ſcarce find a thinking Man but abhors all Impoſition, and every thing that tends to hinder Freedom and Liberty of judging. On the contrary, you ſhall ſcarce meet with one who has had a different Method of Education, whoſe Reaſon generally lieth in Authority, and his Brains in his Common-place Book, that can bear with any Oppoſition, but is for impoſing upon others by Force and Violence. And this proud imperious perſecuting Spirit betrays it ſelf in all their Writings, where, without reſpect to Chriſtianity or good Manners, they ſtick at no Expreſſions, tho never ſo ſcurrilous and abuſive, that will but ſerve to expoſe and vilify their Adverſaries. And which not a little adds to this ſort of Temper, is the Arbitrary and Deſpotical Government in the places of their Education; for there is none ſo inſolent and aſſuming, ſo apt to inſult and domineer, when he has an Opportunity, as he that has been bred in an abſolute Obedience, and a ſlaviſh Compliance: and Experience ſhows, that the longer People have lived in ſuch Places; the readier they are to fly into Extravagance when they come abroad into the World; and if they

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happen to influence the Counſels of the Magiſtrate, they ſeldom fail to preſs him on to illegal Arbitrary Practices, or to practiſe the ſame themſelves in thoſe Places of Power they are advanced to. And the chief Reaſon that makes the Regular Clergy amongſt the Papiſts ſo much more for Perſecution and Cruelty than the Secular, is, becauſe the Government in their Cloiſters is more Tyrannical and Arbitrary than the others: therefore it behoves all Government to take ſpecial Care that thoſe Places where the Youth receive their Learning, ſhould be, what they are uſually called, *Places of free and ingenious Education.* But to return.

Can it be expected from Men thus educated, that they ſhould by their Precepts and Examples, perſwade thoſe of their own Party to any Charity and Benignity for any other Sect that looks on them (as all Sects do on each other) either as Schiſmaticks or Hereticks, and endeavours to perſwade all People to do the ſame? which ſtrikes not only at the Power and Juriſdiction, but even the Maintenance the People beſtow on theſe Prieſts.

It's no wonder that in this Caſe they poſſeſs the People with Hatred and Animoſities againſt all Diſſenters, and are continually urging the Magiſtrate to perſecute them.

them. But it would be as abſurd for him to be governed by them, as it would have been in the Town-Clerk of *Epheſus* to have been ruled by *Demetrius*, and the reſt of the Silver-Smiths in puniſhing *Paul*, whoſe Preaching ſpoiled their Trade.

8. Did the Clergy but conſider the ill Effects that Perſecution has all along had on them, they would not be ſo zealous for it. As long as the Emperors had the Power in their own Hands, there never was a Council but what was an Imperial Machine, either for or againſt a Trinity, or worſhipping of Images, *&c.* as it ſeemed good, not to the Holy Ghoſt, but to thoſe Emperors: and when the Prieſts, by their cunning compliance in Matters of Faith, had by Degrees advanced their own Power above the Emperors, and the Biſhop of *Rome*, as their Head, had the ſummoning of Councils; then they were meer Papal Engines, and in their Synods voted and acted as they were influenced from the Vatican. But if theſe things be too remote, the Engliſh Hiſtory affords us freſher Examples in the Reigns of *Henry* the *8th*, *Edward* the *6th*, *Mary* and *Elizabeth*; how eaſily and how ſmoothly did the Clergy then change their Articles of Faith, and Forms of Worſhip, nay every thing, according to the Inclinations of thoſe Kings and Queens? But we need not

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go ſo far back for Examples; let us but caſt our Eyes upon the preſent State of Religion in every part of Chriſtendom, and we cannot but ſee that the Opinions of the Clergy (as much as they pretend not to take things on truſt) are every where ſuch as the Terms of Preferment (appointed by the Laws of each Country) require of them. Are they not in *Italy*, and in all the Dominions of *Spain*, zealous and thorow Roman-Catholicks? In *France* Catholicks, tho with reſerve to the Liberties of the Gallican Church, and the Regalities? Or rather are they not whatever that abſolute King will have them to be, as we ſee by their acting with the See of *Rome?* And are they not in one half of *Germany* Papiſts, in the other Proteſtants? In *Denmark* and *Sweedland* Lutherans, in the *Alps* Calviniſts, *&c?* This is impoſſible ſhould ſo univerſally happen, if Intereſt had not too great an Influence over them, which makes them very unfit Inſtruments to find out Truth; or if found, ſincerely to diſcover it. And how can they be fit Guides to others, who are not truſted to guide themſelves, but, right or wrong, are obliged to aſſert ſuch Opinions, or elſe to ſtarve? which certainly deſtroys all manner of Argument from their Authority, ſince intereſted Perſons are of no Credit, and therefore are every where

repelled

repelled from giving their Teſtimony. But,

9. The Clergy had a quite different Deſign by ſuch Impoſition, *viz.* To keep the People in a blind Obedience, and make them give an implicite Faith to what they ſo unanimouſly agree in, whether Con or Tranſubſtantiation, or any other ſuch Points; which has had the deſigned Effect: for, to ſpeak the Truth, the great Fault of the Laity has been in paying a ſervile and blind Deference to the Opinions of the Clergy; or, as Mr. *Hales*, in his Tract of Schiſm, ſpeaking of the Laity even of the ſecond Century, expreſſeth it, "Through Sloth and "blind Obedience, they examined not the "things that they were taught, but like "Beaſts of Burden, patiently couched down, "and indifferently underwent whatever "their Superiors laid upon them. And thus much do the Clergy of each Sect object to the Laity of thoſe Sects they differ with: and tho the Laity are ſo much more numerous, and it's their Buſineſs, as well as the Clergy's, to examine into Matters of Religion in order to know what they are to believe or practiſe; yet if we look into Hiſtory, we ſhall find that moſt, if not all, the Errors, Schiſms, Hereſies, that have confounded the Chriſtian World, have had their Origin and chief Support from the Clergy,

Clergy, and that the Laity have been with much ado perverted; and as they have held out longeſt againſt falſe and abſurd Opinions, ſo they have been always the firſt and moſt forward for a Reformation.

10. It's to the Clergy's being every where obliged to defend the eſtabliſhed Opinions, we in a great meaſure owe that in the Writings of Controverſial Points the Words there uſed are much more obſcure, uncertain, and undetermined, than they are even in ordinary Converſation, by which means they are enabled to talk eternally in oppoſing or defending any Propoſition, tho never ſo abſurd; for Men may wrangle perpetually if they affect an Obſcurity and an Uncertainty in the Uſe of their Words: and in truth, the whole Learning of the Schools is only diſputing about Words; there a Man may be furniſhed with ſeveral Words, without Ideas annexed to them; and nothing ſo common as Diſtinctions without any difference. But it had not been ſo intolerable, if this ſort of Jargon had been confined to things meerly ſpeculative, and had not obſcured the material Truths of Law and Religion, nor invaded the Concernments of Human Life and Society, bringing Confuſion, Diſorder, and Uncertainty into all Affairs of Moment.

But I ſhall ſay no more on this Point, only adding, that it was Impoſition, and the conſequence of it, Excommunication for matters of Opinion, which firſt brought in Uncharitableneſs, Envy, Strifes, Fewds, Factions amongſt Chriſtians; and after that, Perſecution not only heightened them, but was the occaſion of the prodigious encreaſe of all other Wickedneſs, by forcing Men to break the Ties and Obligations of Conſcience: and it's impoſſible but that all manner of Immorality muſt abound whilſt Impoſition prevails, which eats out the very Heart and Life of Religion, and at the beſt makes Men profeſs, as a matter of Form, whatever Opinions they find neceſſary for their worldly Convenience. And this I think is ſufficient to ſhow the Execrableneſs of it, eſpecially in Proteſtants, whoſe Principles it's ſo inconſiſtent with.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That the Good of the Society obligeth the Magiſtrate to hinder different Profeſſions of Religion, examin'd.

1. AND now I am at leiſure to examine the only remaining Pretence for the Magiſtrate's uſing force in Matters of meer Religion, that without this Power he would be deſtitute of the Means to prevent Tumults, Diſturbances, Commotions, Wars; *&c.* which are the neceſſary Conſequences of a Toleration.

Not to repeat what I have ſaid, *Chap.* 1. §. 22. or *Chapter* the *4th*, of the horrible Miſchief of Perſecution; nor to mention that what is ſo directly contrary to the Honour of God, and the Good of Souls (as I have proved it to be) can no wiſe contribute to the Temporal Good of Mankind; I ſay, if the profeſſing of any Religion that in whole or part is different from that eſtabliſhed by Law, will cauſe theſe diſmal Effects, then the Proteſtant Perſwaſion in Popiſh Countries, and the Chriſtian Religion in thoſe of the Heathen, will produce them. But if Perſecutors cannot affirm this,

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it's falſe to ſay that any Religion, meerly becauſe it's different from that of the Publick, tends to create Diſturbances; therefore if they have any value for the true Religion, they ought not to make uſe of ſuch an Argument for Perſecution, which will make that criminal, and ſubjects its Profeſſors to Perſecution. And if thoſe wide and many Differences that diſtinguiſh the Chriſtian from all other Religions, will not cauſe any Commotion in Heathen Countries; why ſhould theſe fewer and minuter Differences that are among Chriſtians themſelves, produce them in Chriſtian Countries? Mens different Opinions, in meer Religious things, are no more apt to create thoſe Effects, than different Opinions in Philoſophical Matters, which certainly would equally cauſe Diſturbances, did Men perſecute one another about them; and we ſee different Opinions in Religious Matters do not, when Men for all their different Sentiments are permitted to continue in the ſame Church. It's ſaid, 'tis not barely different Opinions, but the Schiſm and ſeparate Meetings cauſed by thoſe Opinions, that create Diſturbances.

If Schiſms have ſuch Effects, they are in the fault that by Impoſition cauſe thoſe Schiſms. Yet there's no Reaſon why Mens meeting at different Places, with different

Forms and Ways of Worſhip, ſhould ſooner cauſe Commotions or Wars, than their meeting at different Places with the ſame Forms and Ways of Worſhip, did not Temporal Diſadvantages attend one, and Advantages the other. In a word, there are no Reaſons upon the account of any Danger to the State, which forbid Religious Meetings that are open and free to all, and where Men are ſo far from Caballing, that they do not diſcourſe together, but do more ſtrongly hold againſt all Meetings of any other ſort. It's ſaid, thoſe Meetings are compoſed of Perſons of the ſame Opinions; but being of the ſame Opinions (except they are ſuch as are prejudicial to the Government, and thoſe I do not defend) cannot be of any ill conſequence to the Government. But this or any other Argument that is drawn from what is common to all Religious Aſſemblies, will make the Magiſtrates own Church as dangerous as any other; and it can be nothing but the different Uſage, that one is careſſed, and the other perſecuted, that makes one dangerous, and the other not. In a word; there can be no Reaſon drawn from the ſafety of the Society, for the different Sects of Chriſtians to condemn the Religious Aſſemblies of each other, if they teach nothing that's deſtructive to the Civil Society, as ſeditious Conventicles,

venticles, and Nurſeries of Rebellion, but what would have juſtified the Heathen for treating all Chriſtian Congregations as ſuch. And if the differences in Opinion, and number of Sects amongſt the Heathens were far greater than thoſe amongſt the Chriſtians, and yet there was no Commotion upon the Account of Religion, there can be no Reaſon but that the Chriſtians, did they allow the ſame Liberty, would be as free from any ſuch Miſchief, becauſe as long as each Sect thinks it their Duty to tolerate others, no Quarrel can poſſibly happen upon the Account of a Toleration. " It's not therefore " Error (as the Biſhop of *Sarum* obſerves) " or Mens following the Dictates of their " Underſtandings, that has cauſed Diſturbances, and broke the Peace and Order " of their Civil Government, and of the " Church; but the Spirit of Impoſing ſo " commonly found in prevailing Parties: " the Erroneous, as the ſtronger ſide think " they may call them, would have been " quiet if they had not been made to apprehend Inquiſitions, or other Miſeries, " or ill Uſage upon the Account of their " Opinions; but when they have cauſe " given them to fear bad Treatment for a " bare diſſent in an Article of Faith, the " natural and moſt juſt Principle of Self-" preſervation obligeth them to combine

" together for their neceſſary Defence. And " from hence have riſen all thoſe Con- " vulſions that have ſo violently ſhaken " Churches and Kingdoms.

2. Seeing this is evidently ſo, what can be more diſingenuous, as well as wicked, than to ill uſe and oppreſs People, and thereby render them juſtly diſaffected, and then make uſe of that as a Pretence for the puniſhing them? If Men in ſuch caſes are diſaffected, take away the Cauſe of it by forbearing to uſe them ill (which is a very eaſy and natural Remedy) and you take away all pretenſion of Diſſatisfaction. It deſtroys all aſſurance of Human Affairs to ſuppoſe Men will run the riſque of loſing their Lives, or being ruined by a Civil War upon the Account of Religion, when they have all the Freedom in Religious Matters they are capable of. For which unuſual Obligation, they will be ever ſtudious to ſhow a grateful Fidelity, and endeavour by all Services imaginable to lay up a ſtock of Merit, to ſecure their future Quiet; and the different Sects, as ſo many Guardians of the Publick Peace, will be very watchful over one another, and do their utmoſt to diſcover and prevent the Deſigns of any Party whatever, that would be innovating or changing the Form of Government, becauſe by ſuch Alteration they are likely to be

be loſers, and they can hope for nothing better than what they already enjoy; ſo that the more numerous the Sects are, the ſafer the Government is like to be.

3. But on the contrary, where they want this Liberty, the Publick Peace will never be ſecure; for common Intereſt will oblige the perſecuted Sects (tho never ſo contrary in their Principles) to combine together againſt their Common Enemy: and Men when they fight for their Religious as well as Civil Liberties, do it with more than ordinary Reſolution; and there's ſcarce any Party ſo inconſiderable but what upon ſome Emergency or other may endanger a Government. Therefore it's evident, 'tis the Magiſtrates Security, as well as Duty, to grant an impartial inviolable Liberty of Conſcience. The Truth of what has been ſaid, ſufficiently appears by the different Conduct of the Diſſenters, who (tho widely differing from one another) did in the time of Perſecution combine together for their juſt and neceſſary Defence againſt their Perſecutors; yet ſince they enjoy Liberty of Conſcience, are moſt entirely Loyal, Hearty, and Zealous for the Government that grants it. And it's viſible to all that are not wilfully blind, that the quiet and peaceable Behaviour of the Sectaries, (ſince each Party worſhips God according as they think

beſt, without endeavouring to moleſt or diſturb their Neighbours for doing the ſame) deſtroys all the Arguments againſt Toleration upon the Account of Diſcord and Diſturbances; and the longer the Toleration endures, the more Peaceable and Inoffenſive will the different Sects be to one another; becauſe by degrees all thoſe remains of Animoſities and Hatred, that Perſecution did produce, will wear off.

I believe there can be no Inſtance where ever a general and impartial Toleration did produce any Diſturbances and Commotions, much leſs that there ever was any Government overturned by an Indifferency and Impartiality to different Sects; but when that has happened, it has always been by a profeſſed Partiality for one ſide againſt the others: For the People will never be ſo wholly void of all Humanity and Pity, as to be pleaſed to ſee their Relations, Neighbours, and Countreymen barbarouſly uſed, for ſerving God according to the Dictates of their Conſciences. And there's no Perſon, where he has not a direct Intereſt to the contrary (as the Body of the People have not) but would wiſh that Men had the choice of ſerving God as they think beſt, rather than that any one Way (even that which himſelf at preſent eſpouſes) ſhould be forced on them by Penal Laws, becauſe not only

only his own, but any of thoſe Magiſtrates he may chance to be ſubject to changing their Opinions, (neither of which is in his Power to hinder) muſt ſubject him to Puniſhment; beſide, the thing in general being ſo prejudicial to the Publick, muſt make them abhor it: therefore it's Madneſs to ſuppoſe they are fond of any perſecuting Laws, much leſs that they will create a Civil War to obtain them; but on the contrary, by a Toleration, all colour and pretence is taken away from thoſe that might be ſuppoſed to deſire Civil Commotions; and the more People are uſed to Liberty of Conſcience, the greater and more irreconcileable will their diſlike be of Impoſition, and conſequently will the more heartily unite in a general abhorrence of Popery as the grand Promoter of it, and by no pretences whatever will be brought to endure the Thoughts of Popiſh Kings and Princes.

4. It may be urged, That tho the People of themſelves will be content that others ſhould have the ſame freedom of judging for themſelves, and acting according to that Judgment; yet that the Clergy, by the great Influence they have over them, may engage them in Commotions, *&c.*

Where Men have liberty to examine what the Prieſts teach, and diſſent from

them, if they think fit, they will never be able ſo far to impoſe on them, as to oblige them to act ſo directly contrary to their Intereſt: It's Perſecution that chiefly ſupports a blind implicit Faith and Obedience, but an entire Liberty will put a Neceſſity on the People (their Guides differing amongſt themſelves) of judging and examining for themſelves; and the longer Toleration continues, the more will they be freed from a blind implicit Obedience: And in theſe Days, where Light and Knowledg does ſo much abound, it's impoſſible they ſhould be ſo groſly impoſed on by the Clergy, whoſe Conduct, eſpecially in Points relating to their Intereſts, have given them too juſt an Occaſion not to give a blind Aſſent to what they affirm. And whoever does but conſider with what Zeal and Fury the Clergy are for perſecuting Men for a diſſent in Speculative Points, or a Matter of Form, above what they are in Matters of Vice and Immorality, nay, that they are for careſſing even very wicked Perſons, if they appear but zealous for their Intereſt, will quickly ſee it's not a Senſe of Religion that hurries them on, and conſequently how little Reaſon People have to be blindly guided by them in thoſe Points.

Beſides, the Magiſtrate may make the Clergy be for Liberty of Conſcience, by not ſuffering

ſuffering them to enjoy any Preferment, except they will declare their Abhorrence of Force in Matters meerly Religious, and then they will be as much for Liberty as now they are againſt it; except we can ſuppoſe that they will be true to their Intereſt, only when that is againſt the Truth.

5. On the contrary; Let us ſuppoſe the moſt favourable that can happen to a perſecuting Magiſtrate, that he deſtroys all Sects but his own. All that he would get by it, would be to make himſelf a Property to his Prieſts; to whom then it would be too late to deny any thing, and who will not fail to advance ſuch Antichriſtian Doctrines as ſhall exalt them above *all that's called God*; and make all the Bigotted and Superſtitious (which would then be the greateſt part) of their Side: So that all the Magiſtrate would get by perſecuting his Subjects, would be to enſlave himſelf. And what other, I pray, was the Effect of the Chriſtian Kings and Emperors perſecuting their Subjects, but to make themſelves Vaſſals to the Pope the Head, and to the reſt of the Clergy? And had it not been for the Toleration (without which a Reformation was impoſſible) that was allowed the firſt Proteſtants, they had been daily more and more enſlaved; ſo that it's owing to thoſe Hereticks the Popiſh Magiſtrates are for extirpating,

pating, that the Chains are filed off from their Hands and Necks, and that they no longer lie proſtrate at the Feet of an inſolent Prieſt, or are obliged to hold his Bridle or Stirrup, *&c.* And tho ſince the Reformation, much of the extravagant Pretences of the Popiſh Clergy are abated; yet it's obſervable, that in thoſe Places where Perſecution is higheſt, the Magiſtrates are moſt ſubject to the Power of the Prieſts. And if the Magiſtrates themſelves are thus dealt with, what Uſage muſt the People have, who are indeed made moſt miſerable and wretched Slaves, as tho Nature had intended them to be (what the Clergy there ſuppoſe they are) *Aſini ad portenda onera Clericorum?*

6. It may be ſaid, This will only happen in Popiſh Countries. But if Perſecution was the Cauſe of theſe moſt pernicious Effects in the more early Times of Chriſtianity, when Men were ſuppoſed to be better; What Reaſon is there to imagine, that in theſe latter and worſer Times, it will not have as bad if not worſe Effects? And if the Proteſtant Clergy can perſwade the Magiſtrate to uſe Force to hinder People from examining, or even knowing any Doctrine but what they have a mind to impoſe on them, a thing ſo contrary to the Light of Nature, the Goſpel, and their own Principles;

ples; what is there that by their joint Endeavours they could not, or would not introduce when it ſerved to promote their Intereſt? Nay, have not the Proteſtant Clergy been every jot as much, if not more zealous and induſtrious than the Popiſh, to enſlave the People, and promote Arbitrary Power, and have preached up abſolute Paſſive Obedience even as much as Faith in Chriſt, as knowing that the only way to ſecure Tyranny in the Church, was firſt to get it eſtabliſhed in the State; becauſe Tyranny, by bringing the generality to Poverty and Slavery, muſt depreſs their Minds, and debaſe their Thoughts, and make them ready blindly to ſubmit to the Determinations of the Clergy? And tho ſome would be in better Circumſtances, yet what they enjoy would be ſo precarious, that they could not be ſecure without they comply with the Religion of the Prince; who if he be a great Bigot, (as the Clergy would do their utmoſt to make him ſo) would be ſure to uſe all the Violence Arbitrary Power could give him to force Men to profeſs the Court Religion: Or if he ſhould turn to the other Extream, and inſtead of being Superſtitious, ſhould have little or no regard for Religion; yet if he ſhould ſometime or other be troubled in Conſcience, (as even the moſt vicious often

ten are) the Clergy would be ſure to perſwade him, that the only way to expiate his former Guilt, would be to promote the true Religion, by depriving thoſe that are not of it of their Poſſeſſions, and inveſting the Church (that is, themſelves) with it. And to ſpeak the Truth, it's to ſuch that the Clergy have been moſt obliged, either for deſtroying their Oppoſers, or elſe for endowing them with vaſt Riches. In a word; It's not meerly Speculative Matters, or Forms, or Ceremonies, wherein the Papiſts differ from the Proteſtants; but thoſe things (which I have now mentioned, and wherein they agree) that make Popery and Slavery inſeparable: Nay in Church-Matters, do not the Proteſtant Clergy (even thoſe that own the Magiſtrate, under Chriſt, to be, no Cauſes or Perſons excepted, *Supream Head or Governour of the Church*) claim, as well as the Papiſts, a Supream Power, and aſſert themſelves Independent and Abſolute Governours of the Church? And conſequently, ſince there cannot be two Supreams in the ſame Matters, they can extend that Power, as occaſion ſerves, even further than the Pope does, ſince they and not their Subject the Magiſtrate, will be Judg of the Extent of their own Power. And have not the Prieſts of the different Parties, as occaſion ſerved, enlarged their Pretences?

Pretences? witneſs the Kirk, which as it had an Opportunity, exerciſed as great a Power, and with as high a Hand as the Pope himſelf. And had *Laud* and that Party conquered, there's no doubt but the People had been as much enſlaved to them, as they are in other Countries to the Pope. In ſhort, could any one Party have extirpated by Perſecution the others, (it being the Diviſion amongſt the Clergy, which of them ſhould lord it over God's Heritage, that has hindred each others Attempts) we had long before now been under as great a Tyranny as the Papiſts; eſpecially had they thoſe Revenues, which in a manner enabled the Popiſh Prieſts to effect what they had a mind to, and which our Clergy think ſo much their due, that they look on it no leſs than Sacrilege that they are hindred from enjoying them. But,

7. This is not all the Miſchief that attends forcing the People to a Uniformity in all thoſe Points the Prieſts get to be eſtabliſhed as neceſſary to Church-Communion; becauſe where People are wiſe, knowing, and have any Value for Religion, they will be ſure to employ their Thoughts about it; which if they do, it's morally impoſſible that they ſhould be of a Mind in all thoſe Points: Therefore ſuch a Uniformity is only practicable in a Nation overrun with

ſottiſh

ſottiſh Ignorance and groſs Stupidity. But what can be more prejudicial to a Nation, than want of Knowledg, which is neceſſary to preſerve a State, and encreaſe its Strength and Riches, by promoting all uſeful Arts and Trades, which we ſee by Experience will not thrive but where there is Liberty of Conſcience?

Beſides, where Ignorance and Superſtition, the neceſſary Conſequence of Perſecution, prevails, it's almoſt unavoidable but that Men, either of themſelves will run into, or elſe by deſigning Perſons be perſwaded into ſeveral Opinions prejudicial to the State, as amongſt the Papiſts ſo many Holy-days are; or, which is much more prejudicial, ſuch prodigious Numbers going into Orders, (by which the Clergy are enabled to carry on the Common Intereſt, and therefore will every where deſign it) which oppreſſeth the Common-Wealth with ſo many uſeleſs Perſons, who no-wiſe contribute to the Support or the Encreaſe of the Riches of a Country; who alſo, conſidering how they muſt be maintained, will be more burdenſome than a ſtanding Army of double the Number. Theſe, or other as prejudicial Superſtitions, are ſcarce poſſible to be avoided where Perſecution reigns.

8. But

8. But I need mention no other Effects of Perſecution than the Diſorders, Tumults, Confuſions, Wars, Deſolations, which are the immediate and neceſſary Conſequences of it, and which have always happened in perſecuting Countries; which to relate, would be to write a Hiſtory of thoſe Countries, and which alone is ſufficient to convince any one how fatal it is to Human Societies.

It was Perſecution that ſo weakened and ruined the Roman Empire, that it became an eaſy Prey to the Barbarians: And it had done the ſame to the Germans, had not the Treaty of *Munſter* put ſome ſtop to it; ſince which time the Papiſts and Proteſtants (taught by woful Experience) are content to allow one another, in ſeveral places, not only their diſtinct Congregations, but to meet in the very ſame Churches; and (which is more to be wondered at) the Preferments of thoſe Churches are enjoyed by them alternately with the greateſt Quiet and Peace imaginable. But if we have a mind to have a nearer proſpect of the Advantage of Liberty of Conſcience, we need not look farther than the Province of *Holland*; which tho a very ſmall Tract of Land, labouring under a great many natural Diſadvantages, and in which, before a Toleration was indulged, were only a few ſmall

ſmall ſcattered Villages and Huts of Fiſhermen, is now crowded with vaſt Numbers of People, filled with immenſe Riches, and adorned with many ſtately and magnificent Cities; and all this in a manner owing to its receiving thoſe Saints and Confeſſors, (for ſo I muſt call them, whatever their Opinions are) who for their Love to God, and Zeal for his Service, were forc'd to leave their Country, and fled there for Protection. And it's to this (the greateſt and nobleſt Charity) that *Amſterdam* (in a peculiar manner the Care of Heaven) ows its Greatneſs. Here eſpecially 'tis that the Prophecy of *Eſay* ſeems to be fulfilled, that the *Wolf ſhall lie down with the Lamb, and the Leopard with the Kid*, &c. each Sect ſtriving to outvie one another in promoting the Intereſt of the City, and in being charitable to thoſe that want it; no Differences of Opinions cauſing the leaſt diſturbance to the Publick, or hindering the Friendſhip of private Perſons; tho it was otherwiſe, not only in this City, but in all Places of the *United Provinces*, when they had the unhappineſs to be influenced by the Clergy, and the weakneſs to call a Synod on pretence of compoſing the *Arminian* or *Quinquarticularian* Controverſies: Which, as it uſually happens, only encreaſed them; and which is worſe, created not only Animoſities

ties and Rancour in the Minds of Men, but Diſcontents, Diſorders, Tumults, to almoſt the Ruin of the Common-Wealth; whilſt in *England*, the Government neither condemning or cenſuring either Party, the Contention had no miſchievous Effect, but of it ſelf died away. Had the Nation acted as wiſely with reſpect to thoſe fooliſh Controverſies about Ceremonies and other Trifles, how much Blood and Treaſure had it ſaved, and how happy had it been, tho now it has (grown wiſer by Experience) clearly perceived that nothing but Liberty in thoſe Points could quiet and compoſe the Minds of the People, or preſerve the Nation ſo much exhauſted by Perſecution.

9. We need not look abroad for Arguments for a Toleration, ſince we never made a ſtep towards it, but what has been of happy Conſequence to the Nation; witneſs the mighty Advantages we gained by the Liberty allowed the Walloons, and other Diſſenters from the Church eſtabliſhed by Law. What was it that made *Norwich*, (which in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign was ſo deſolate, that it was often debated in Council, whether it ſhould be demoliſhed as being a Receptacle of vagrant and idle Perſons, and therefore dangerous to the Government) become ſo very conſiderable for its Riches and Trade, but

the granting Liberty to the Flemins (whom *D'Alva*'s Cruelty had forced to fly their Countrey) to ſettle there, and ſet up their Manufacture of Stuffs, as they did at *Colcheſter* their Bays, to the infinite Advantage of the Nation? And there's no Reaſon why we may not expect greater Advantages by thoſe Manufactures and Trades the French Refugees (if well encouraged) may ſet up with us. On the contrary, Perſecution has been as prejudicial to the Nation, by driving not only the Traders and Trades themſelves beyond Seas, (as it has happened with reſpect to thoſe Woollen Manufactures wrought in *Suſſex* and *Eſſex*, which thoſe that by Perſecution were forced to leave their Countrey, have ſet up in *Holland* and other Places, to the almoſt ruin of our Trade of thoſe Woollen Manufactures in the Places within the *Sound*) but by hindring great Numbers (of which many Inſtances can be given) who had they Liberty to exerciſe their Religion, would have ſettled here to as great Advantage to the Nation as any it has permitted to inhabit here. But it would be endleſs to mention the great Miſchiefs Perſecution has cauſed, even in the Memory of Man, by either driving great Numbers of our moſt uſeful People beyond Seas, or by ſtarving them, or cauſing them to periſh in noiſom Jails, or by impri-

impriſoning or beggaring them, and thereby depriving them of the Opportunity and Means to carry on their Trades. To give no other Inſtance but in *Briſtol*, where, by reaſon of the Perſecution in *Ch.* 2*d*'s Time, the Cuſtoms of that Place were diminiſhed by almoſt three parts in four; and it's no wonder, for Men will not then expoſe themſelves by Trading, but hide their Heads to avoid Perſecution. And 'tis owing to Toleration, that our Trade is in ſo good Circumſtances as it is. But nothing was ſo fatal to *England* as that unnatural War in King *Charles* the 1*ſt*'s Reign, chiefly cauſed by Impoſition and Perſecution, fatal at laſt to the Perſecutors themſelves. And the King after he had ſeen the great Encourager and Promoter of them brought to condign Puniſhment, was himſelf publickly executed before that Palace from whence he iſſued out his perſecuting Orders; yet his Son *Charles* the Second, to the unſpeakable Prejudice of the Nation, took the ſame Method of perſecuting his Proteſtant Subjects, even thoſe that were the chief Inſtruments of his Reſtauration; which however ungrateful as well as unjuſt it was in him, yet in reſpect of ſeveral of them, it was but a juſt Judgment, who, when it was in their own Power, were themſelves Perſecutors. And it's more than probable, that that King

(who had no other deſign in cauſing the Proteſtants to perſecute one another, but that they might more eaſily become a Prey to the Papiſts) was taken off by thoſe very People whoſe Intereſt by it he deſigned to promote. And as to the late King (the chief promoter of Perſecution in his Brother's Time) the Nation was very ſenſible, for all his prevaricating, what a dreadful Perſecution he intended them, and therefore it's not ſtrange they would not truſt him.

10. It's no wonder that God brings down ſignal Judgments on the Heads of Perſecutors, ſince they, like the Giants of old, make War againſt Heaven it ſelf, and endeavour to deprive God of his peculiar Empire over Conſcience, which obligeth him (if I may ſo ſay) to aſſert his Right by making Examples of ſuch bold and impious Men. And Examples of this Nature are ſo frequent, that Men begin to wonder at the long uninterrupted Proſperity of the grand Perſecutor, the French King. But let it be conſidered, that Perſecution is much more odious in Proteſtants in general, as being directly contrary to their Principles, but with all the aggravating Circumſtances in theſe Nations, if upon their being freed from the danger of Popery, they ſhould themſelves practiſe the worſt part of it, in perſecuting thoſe they judg to be Here-

Hereticks, which is the very ſame thing they ſo loudly exclaim againſt in the French King. And let it be remembred, the Supream Power is every where the ſame, and that they have as much right in *France* to judg who are Hereticks as any where elſe. Therefore may it not be feared, that inſtead of the French King being made an Example of God's Anger, he may be made an Inſtrument to puniſh others?

11. The great Advantage the Nation has gained by the Liberty that has been allowed, might, one would think, deſtroy all the remains of a perſecuting Spirit, ſince it is that which has preſerved Church and State; elſe it had been impoſſible that the Nation could have ſupported it ſelf under ſuch Calamities as a War and a general Perſecution. And it's the ſecuring to the People their Religious as well as their Civil Rights, that has made them with ſo much Patience and Contentedneſs undergo all hardſhips, and in the midſt of them be ſo very zealous for the Government. And for my part, I doubt not but it's owing to Providence, that ſo ſignally declares it ſelf for Liberty of Conſcience, that in the Courſe of this War we have had ſo many ſignal Mercies and miraculous Favours: and certainly we ought not to provoke God to repent of his Mercies, by perſecuting any Sect whatever.

12. By a partial Toleration we act inconſiſtent with our ſelves, for either the Magiſtrate ought to puniſh, or ought not to puniſh thoſe that err in Matters meerly Religious. If the firſt, why are there ſo many of the Erroneous exempted even from the leaſt Puniſhment? If the laſt, why are not all exempted? Where ſhall we find a Rule to puniſh ſome and not others, nay with the ſame Puniſhment, if the End of it be, as it's pretended, to make Men impartially conſider?

I do not mention this ſo much upon the account of a ſmall Sect that's ſtill liable to the laſh of the Law, but for the ſake of all Sects in general; becauſe whilſt that Doctrine of uſing Force upon the Account of Matters meerly Religious, is not wholly abhorred, no Sect can be ſafe. For,

13. If any one Sect is to be puniſhed upon a Civil or Religious Account, it will involve all: for as to the firſt, the Arguments from Diſcord and Diſturbances will equally affect all that diſſent in Matters ſimply Religious. And as to the laſt, there's no Reaſon to excuſe Schiſms, and puniſh Hereſies; ſince, as it's owned by all, a Schiſmatick cannot be a Member of the Church of Chriſt, which is but one, and conſequently he is out of the ordinary way of Salvation; and a Heretick, nay an Infidel

Infidel can be but ſo; and the Antient Church, as Mr. *Dodwell* has ſufficiently proved, made no difference between a Heretick, and a Schiſmatick that pretended to juſtify his Schiſm upon Principles.

14. Beſides, the greater Moment any Point is of, the greater Reaſon there is for Liberty of Conſcience, becauſe Men ought not by Puniſhment to be hindred from examining into it, which if they do ſincerely, and ſhould be miſtaken (as we are all fallible, very fallible Men) that Miſtake will never be imputed to them. And if all that are miſtaken in theſe nice abſtruſe Points of Belief ſhould be puniſhed, it would involve the greateſt part of the now Orthodox Clergy, who are ſo much divided amongſt themſelves in theſe Points, that there's no one Party equal to all the reſt, and yet there can be but one Party in the right. And it ought to be obſerved, that the Arguments any one Party of the Diſſenters formerly urged for their own Liberty, tho otherwiſe unanſwerable, were eaſily evaded by ſaying, they would equally hold for allowing Liberty to Hereticks as well as them; ſo that it's evident, except Perſecution is wholly abhorred, any little Accident or Turn may hazard the Liberty of any Sect whatever.

CHAP. VIII.

Some few Reaſons for the Diſſenters not taking the Sacramental Teſt but in their own Churches, and for a General Naturalization.

1. BEFORE I conclude, I muſt firſt beg leave to add a word in behalf of all the Diſſenters in general, that hold no Opinions deſtructive to the Government, diſown all Foreign Power, acknowledg the King to be Rightful and Lawful, and contribute equally to the ſupport of the Government, that they may be capable to enjoy all Places of Truſt and Profit: for how is it conſiſtent with that Juſtice and Impartiality the Government ought to have for all its Subjects, to deprive any of them of the Privileges of their Countrey to which they are born, (and for the diſcharge of which they have no ways incapacitated themſelves) for no other Reaſon, but becauſe their Conſciences will not permit them to receive the Sacrament after the manner of the Eſtabliſhed Church, which is a Matter wholly foreign to Civil Power, and a Diſpute about a thing in it ſelf indifferent? And ſince the

the Parliament has made them Legal Churches in other reſpects, why ſhould not the receiving the Sacrament in their own Meetings qualify them as well as at any others? The denying it them can only hinder the truly Conſcientious (of which there never was a Nation that had more need) from ſupplying Places of Truſt. And as this (with humble Submiſſion) is a very great Hardſhip on them, ſo it is as great a Prejudice to the Publick, not only as it tends to diſcourage the Loyalty and Affection of thoſe that have ſuch marks of Suſpicion and Diſgrace fixed on them, but as it depriveth the Government (which at this Time eſpecially has need of the Hearts and Hands of all its Subjects) of the Service of no ſmall number of the moſt uſeful, who in ſpight of all the Diſadvantages they lie under, are moſt hearty and zealous for the Government. Had they ſworn to bear true Allegiance to the King, and yet looked on him as a Uſurper, or (which is all one) a King *de facto*, and had made uſe of ſuch fooliſh Equivocations, Diſtinctions, Reſervations, (as would even ſhame a Jeſuit) to evade the Force of their Oaths, and under-hand act againſt the Government, there might be ſome pretence to exclude them from theſe Advantages; but otherwiſe there can be no Reaſon for it, and thoſe that will be diſobliged

liged by the granting it, are as much ſo already, as they well can be by the Liberty that is given them.

In ſhort, no Government can be well ſerved that makes any thing a Condition of obtaining an Advantage but what evidently contributes to its Eſtabliſhment, or any thing a means of Excluſion but what tends to its Ruin: and as Capacity and Fidelity ſhould be the only juſt Titles to advance Men, ſo Incapacity and Infidelity to debar or exclude them. But when the being of this or that Sect is a ſtep to Preferment, they will be ſure to prefer the Intereſt of that Sect before the Publick; and Men will be more conſidered for their Zeal to a Party, than for their Ability to ſerve their Countrey. And when they ſhall be commended or condemned, favoured or oppoſed, not according to their Merits, but as they are of this or that Sect or Party, it muſt fill all Places, even the chief Council of a Nation, with Confuſion and Faction, and make them influenced by indirect and ſiniſter Ends, inſtead of the Publick Good.

But if all Sects were equally and impartially dealt with, there would be no other than a noble Emulation amongſt them who ſhould do moſt good to the Publick, and be moſt ſerviceable to their King and Countrey, and with reſpect to one another,

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a moſt laudable Contention to outvie each other in all Acts of Charity and Kindneſs, and all other good Offices, and a pious Strife who ſhould be moſt exemplary in their Lives and Converſations, as the beſt way to ſupport themſelves, and gain Credit and Eſteem to their Party; which muſt needs bring an unexpreſſible Happineſs to the Nation, and reſtore again the Golden Age, by reviving amongſt us the true Spirit of Chriſtianity.

By what has been ſaid, I think I may eaſily conclude, that a univerſal, impartial, inviolable Liberty of Conſcience, (except where the Principles of any ſort of Profeſſors tend evidently to the Prejudice of the Community, and the Ruin of the Government) is the true Intereſt and great Duty, both of Governours and Governed. And,

If to this Liberty a General Naturalization was added, it could not fail of cauſing an infinite deal of Good to the Nation, and quickly repair the Loſs we have ſuſtained, either by the War, or by Perſecutions: For the Excellency of our Conſtitution and Laws (not to be equalled in any other Country) and the Happineſs of the Climate abounding with ſo many natural Advantages, eſpecially for Trading, will tempt, not only great Numbers of uſeful Handicrafts-men, but alſo of Merchants and trading

trading People to ſettle here, and bring their Effects with them; by which Means we ſhould have no reaſon to doubt of our being Maſters of thoſe Trades we want, and improving thoſe we have already, by making the Manufactures either cheaper or better. And then, and not till then, we ſhall have a ſufficient number of Hands to carry on the Fiſhing Trade, and not want them any where elſe; by all which means we ſhould ſo encreaſe our Seamen and Shipping, that we could not fail of being Maſters at Sea, tho all *Europe* ſhould combine againſt us. And ſince the Succeſs of a War does now in a manner wholly depend upon the Riches of a Nation; and they that have moſt Money, are almoſt certain to have the better of it; the Riches that muſt flow into the Nation by this Means, would enable them (tho they ſtood alone) to be a Match for their moſt potent Enemy, when perhaps otherwiſe we may ſometime or other be in danger of being oppreſſed by him. And when a troubleſome Neighbour encreaſes in Riches and Strength, we are very much wanting to our ſelves, if we do not to our utmoſt endeavour to do the ſame. All that the Government would ſuffer by a Naturalization, would be to have not only the Number of its Subjects (in which conſiſts the Riches and Strength of a Nation) encreaſed,

creaſed, and them alſo under as ſtrict an Obligation of Loyalty and Duty as any of the Native Subjects, but its Revenues alſo augmented, by not only more of the Exciſeable Commodities being conſumed, but by the vaſt Encreaſe of Trade, which muſt proportionably increaſe the Cuſtoms. All the Diſadvantage the Natives would receive by ſuch an Act, would be, that by a quick Vent and Conſumption of the Products of the Country, the Value of all home Commodities would be raiſed, Land and Houſes yield greater Rents, and Money by its Encreaſe and quick Circulation be plenty; and thoſe that have a mind to diſpoſe of their Eſtates, would (the Number of the Chapmen being ſo much encreaſed) ſell to a much greater Advantage; and all the Purchaſe-Money the Foreigners give, would be an additional Treaſure to the Nation.

But it requires a juſt Treatiſe to ſhow, (what I have not as much as time to hint at here) all the Advantages we ſhould receive by a Naturalization Act: Therefore I ſhall only anſwer an Objection of ſome, who tho they cannot but own that it would be advantageous to the Nation, yet are againſt it, upon an Apprehenſion it may be prejudicial to Religion. But I think I have already proved, that no Part of Religion can be oppoſite to, or inconſiſtent with the Good

of

of Societies; but on the contary, the promoting the Publick Good is the chiefeſt Part of it. And if to ſupply the Wants of the Poor and Needy be the greateſt Duty, *viz.* of Charity, and to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows, in order to relieve their Neceſſities, be *pure and undefiled Religion*, it muſt be ſo in the higheſt manner, to prevent Peoples falling into Want and Poverty: And whatever contributes to this, (eſpecially when it tends to the Support, not only of a few, but of a whole Nation) muſt be the Duty of every one to promote that is a lover of his God, his King, and his Country. And whatſoever is inconſiſtent with doing this, is ſo far from being a Matter of Religion, that it muſt be either ſinful in it ſelf, or by the Circumſtances that attend it become ſo, and therefore by no means is to be oppoſed to the Good of a Nation. And indeed nothing can be more ſtrange, than to ſuppoſe God has commanded any thing inconſiſtent with the Publick Good: Yet without this Suppoſition, not only Perſecution, Humane Sacrifices, and abſolute Paſſive Obedience, (the moſt pernicious Doctrines that can be) but no other deſtructive Ones could have prevailed. And it's this monſtrous Abſurdity that *Jacobites* are guilty of, in thinking they are obliged to ſacrifice the Peace and Happineſs of a Nation

Nation to the Intereſt of a particular Perſon.

But I ſhall conclude, only adding, That I hope what I have ſaid will not diſpleaſe the Magiſtrate, ſince I have no other Intent, than to hinder him from committing one of the greateſt Sins Humane Nature is capable of, and which cannot but turn to his Prejudice here, as well as hereafter.

And as to the Clergy, This cannot diſpleaſe thoſe that have what the Biſhop of *Sarum* (in his Preface to *Lactantius*) calls *Lay Pity*, ſince I have endeavoured to ſhow how much they are in the right in abhorring Perſecution, and how cauſleſly they are for that Reaſon hated (as generally they are) by their Brethren: And for thoſe that are for Perſecution, the greateſt Kindneſs I could do them, was to repreſent, as fully as I could, in ſo ſhort a Diſcourſe, the fatal Tendency and Conſequence of that Doctrine, that they may repent of it; which if I any ways contribute to, I think my Pains happily beſtowed; if not, I yet hope a Reward from him who accepts the hearty ſincere endeavour of thoſe that do their beſt to promote Peace and Charity: which if any hinder or obſtruct, it's the Duty of all good Chriſtians to pray that God would abate their Pride, aſſwage their Malice, and confound their Devices; that there

there may be *Glory to God on High, Peace on Earth, and good Will towards Men.*

A POSTSCRIPT concerning the *Letter to a Convocation-Man.*

I Muſt beg the Reader's pardon for further treſpaſſing on his Patience, in making ſome Remarks on a Pamphlet entituled, *A Letter to a Convocation-Man*; I mean, as to that part of it which (under the Pretence of giving Reaſons for the Sitting of a Convocation) rails at a Toleration in Matters ſimply Religious, and endeavours to deprive Men of the Right of Judging for themſelves about Religious Doctrines and Opinions.

1. The Author of this Letter (*P.* 3.) affirms, *That the Indifference of all Religion is endeavoured to be eſtabliſhed by the Pleas for the Juſtice and Neceſſity of a Univerſal unlimited Toleration.* Which Aſſertion, were it true, would make the King and Parliament indifferent whether they were Quakers, ſince they have given them a Toleration: But it's ſo far from being true, that there cannot well be a greater Demonſtration of Mens not thinking all Religions indifferent, than a deſire to be tolerated in the Profeſſion of that they judg the beſt. Did they ſuppoſe all Religions equal, it would be indifferent to them whether there was a Toleration, ſince they would be ſure to avoid all Perſecution,

ſecution, by being of the Magiſtrate's Religion.

2. The Author (*P.* 19.) ſaith, *Tho the Clergy have no Power of changing, adding, or diminiſhing the Law of God, yet the applying this Law to particular Caſes, explaining the Doubts that may ariſe concerning it, deducing Conſequences from it in things not explicitly determined already by that Law, and the enforcing Submiſſion and Obedience to their Determinations, are the proper Objects of their Power and Juriſdiction, who are to act by ordinary and natural Means, ſuch as Aſſembling, Debating, and by majority of Voices Deciding.* But here I muſt demand, Who ſhall judg whether what the Clergy thus determine, be either adding, changing, or diminiſhing the Law of God? If the Prieſts, to be ſure they will not ſay their Determinations are ſo: But if I muſt judg, then I ought to reject their Determinations, if I believe them not conſonant to Scripture; but if I think them agreeable to it, then I muſt believe them (not for the ſake of their Determinations, but) becauſe I judg them to be ſo; and conſequently I muſt be guided by my own Reaſon in all things of Religion.

If by *the Doubts that may ariſe*, be meant any thing that admits of diſpute, there is ſcarce any thing ſo clear but what may, or does; and if in all ſuch Caſes I am obliged to ſubmit to the Determinations of the Clergy, I may be forc'd to believe what I judg is either adding, changing, or diminiſhing the Law of God, as it's manifeſt all Sects, by believing it to be of their own Side, do judg their Adverſaries do add, *&c.* But if it be meant, that the Clergy have a Right to make me believe a thing whilſt I

doubt of the Truth of it, that is impoſſible; and ſo it is to change my Mind, before I ſee Reaſon for it. It may be ſaid, tho it's not in my Power to believe as they will have me, yet I may do as they command, even whilſt I doubt of the Lawfulneſs of the Action: But then to obey them, would be the ready way to damn my ſelf; for *he that acts when he doubts, is damn'd.*

No Law, whether of God or Man, can ſcarce be of any uſe, without applying it to particular Caſes, and deducing Conſequences from it, and explaining Doubts that ariſe: But if the Laity muſt be determined by the Prieſts in all ſuch Caſes, they muſt become Brutes, and renounce their Reaſon, where they ought to make the moſt uſe of it.

Our Author, I confeſs, ſays not that a Man ſhould reſt in the Determinations of the Clergy in deducing Conſequences in things explicitly determined by the Law of God: But what is meant by things explicitly determined, I do not well underſtand; for tho Words are explicit, yet the Things implied in thoſe Words, are certainly implicit: And if the Clergy can oblige Men to follow (right or wrong) their Determinations in deducing Conſequences in things implicitly determined by Scripture, they may oblige Men to add, change or diminiſh the Law of God in moſt Points.

3. The Popiſh Prieſts never carried their Pretences higher than this Author does; they have not the Impudence to aſſert, they can oblige People to believe contrary to the Law of God; but that for the ſake of the Church's Peace, they have a Right to determine thoſe Controverſies

verſies that may ariſe among the Faithful; and when they have done ſo, none ought to begin to examine thoſe Points again. In a word, there is no Medium between the Proteſtant Doctrine of every one having a Right to judg for himſelf, and the Popiſh one of being obliged to believe as the Church does. But this Author is much more abſurd than the Papiſts, in making Truth and Falſhood to be decided, not by an Infallible Pope or Council, whoſe Decrees are to bind the Catholick Church, but by the caſting Voices of a Fallible Convocation in every Nation; which may in *Spain* oblige the People to believe Tranſubſtantiation, in *Sweden* Conſubſtantiation, in *England* the Real Corporeal Preſence; ſo that a Man may be bound to change his Sentiments with his Habitation, and the Difference of a Degree or two may oblige him to oppoſite Opinions. And yet, as abſurd as this is, ſince the Clergy are ſo infinitely divided amongſt themſelves, the Laity muſt either do ſo, or elſe judg for themſelves, if it were but to know which of the Clergy were in the Right. But,

4. The Pamphleteer ſuppoſes this impoſſible, and (*pag.* 18. where he ſpeaks out) he roundly tells the Commons of *England*, That *it's a little too much to ſuppoſe Countrey Gentlemen, Merchants, or Lawyers, to be nicely skill'd in the Languages of the Bible, Maſters of all the Learning of the Fathers, or of the Hiſtory of the Primitive Church, which they muſt in ſome meaſure be, who ſit Judges of Religious Doctrines and Opinions, which ought to be left to their proper Tribunal, a Convocation.*

Had People at the Reformation been of this Mind, we might ſtill have groaned under the Popiſh Yoke; for the Majority of the Clergy, not only in *England*, but every where elſe, were as averſe to this Reformation (which may juſtly be called a Lay one) as the Jewiſh Prieſts were to that of Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

If to be Maſters of all the Learning of the Fathers, be neceſſary to the judging of Religious Doctrines, it's as neceſſary the Laity ſhould underſtand them, becauſe the Clergy are ſtrangely divided amongſt themſelves about them, each Sect pretending they are on their Side; which ſhows that either the Clergy are not to be truſted with giving us the Senſe of thoſe Fathers, becauſe they make them ſay any thing according as it ſerves their preſent Intereſt; or that the Fathers talk forward and backward, contradict themſelves as well as one another; which if ſo, ſhows great diſingenuity in the Clergy not to own it: and if we may truſt Mr. *Chillingworth* (a Man unſuſpected of the leaſt Prieſtcraft) he tells us, *Chap. 6.* "That he ſees "plainly, and that with his own Eyes, that "there are Councils againſt Councils, ſome "Fathers againſt others, the ſame Fathers a-"gainſt themſelves, a Conſent of Fathers of "one Age againſt a Conſent of Fathers of a-"nother Age, the Church of one Age againſt "the Church of another Age.

5. The Apoſtles were ſo far from requiring the Chriſtians to give up their Judgments to any Number of fallible Men, that they command them all to make uſe of their Reaſon in judging of Religion, commend thoſe (as the Bereans) that

that did ſo, and blame thoſe that did not; *Why have you not judged theſe things of your ſelves?* And if Men were then obliged to try the Spirits, becauſe there were many falſe Prophets gone out into the World, there is certainly much more reaſon to do ſo now. But having ſpoken fully to this Point in *Ch.* 2. *Par.* 1. I ſhall only add, that it's a Rule authoriſed by common Senſe, not to conſent to any thing till we are capable of judging of its Truth; nor can we, without renouncing our Reaſon, ſuppoſe God will have us believe any thing without ſeeing good Reaſon for it: And nothing can reflect more on the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, than to ſuppoſe that he, who would have all Men come to the Knowledg of his Will, ſhould yet make it ſo obſcure, that not one in a thouſand is capable of knowing it, becauſe it depends upon Skill in Fathers, Criticks, Church-Hiſtory, *&c.* A Man may therefore juſtly conclude, if there be any ſuch Doctrines pretended, (as there are in moſt Syſtems) the impoſſibility of the Peoples judging of them, alone demonſtrates they come not from God; who as he was able, ſo his Goodneſs made him willing to expreſs Truth ſo clearly, that all who are not wilfully blind may underſtand it in order to practice; and it would ſeem ſtrange that God ſhould chuſe Fiſhermen, and ſuch ſimple Perſons, to preach a Religion intelligible only to the Learned and Philoſophers. There's no need of running to Fathers, Criticks, *&c.* For *he that will do the Will of God, ſhall know* (as our Saviour, *John* 7. ſaith) *of the Doctrine whether it be of God*; that is, if it be ſuch as tends to make

me love, reverence and honour God, or is beneficial to Man; and a Doctrine cannot ſhew it ſelf to be of God any otherwiſe than as it has this Mark and Character ſtampt upon it. Hence it is that God, *Heb.* 8. ſpeaking of the Goſpel-time and Covenant, ſaith, *I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts: And they ſhall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* And to interpret this Law (which is written in our Hearts, and which we cannot from the greateſt to the leaſt fail to diſcover, if we attend to our own Minds) by Fathers, Councils, *&c.* is to interpret a Rule that's clear and evident in it ſelf, by what is moſt obſcure and myſterious. If the Goſpel be hid from any, it's not the Poor, the Babes, the Simple, but the Pretenders to vain *Philoſophy*, and *Science falſly ſo called*, the Wranglers and *Diſputers of this World*, who would fain be thought to be the *Wiſe and Prudent*; and as it was their Prejudices and Prepoſſeſſions made them eſteem the Goſpel the *fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, ſo it afterward made ſome of them corrupt the fooliſhneſs of Preaching with their wiſe unintelligible Philoſophy; and their Succeſſors, by *following the Tradition of Men, made void the Commandments of God.* The firſt Reformers deſpiſed any Authority but that of Reaſon and Scripture; and had thoſe that ſucceeded them followed their Example, they had no doubt deſtroyed Popery, whoſe chief Support conſiſts in Human Traditions, as Fathers, Councils, *&c.*

6. The

6. The Subject of this Book ſhows how little is to be relied on the Authority of thoſe Men, on which they will have every thing to rely: for tho the Light of Nature, by placing Man in ſuch a helpleſs Condition, that he cannot ſubſiſt without the Aſſiſtance of others, does oblige all Men (except he that is Orthodox to himſelf is Alſufficient for himſelf) to be moſt kind, loving and friendly one to another; and agreeable to this, the Scripture moſt paſſionately recommends the Love of our Neighbour, but moſt frequently and zealouſly when we differ from him; and tho the obſervance of this Command has at all times been abſolutely neceſſary, the Chriſtians from the beginning being divided in their Sentiments; yet for all this, there never was a Convocation of Prieſts, but what notoriouſly broke this Rule, by not only moſt uncharitably anathematizing and damning thoſe that could not comply with their Sentiments, but by obliging Men to abſtain from all Commerce and Converſe with them, and (as ſoon as the Chriſtians had the Power of the Sword) to treat them moſt inhumanely and barbarouſly: And by degrees the Clergy ſo intoxicated the People, that they were perſwaded that this Branch of the Fundamental Law of Nature and the Goſpel, (ſo abſolutely neceſſary in this State of Ignorance and Darkneſs) was one of the greateſt Crimes imaginable. The Author of the *Letters concerning Toleration*, is (if not abſolutely the firſt) the firſt that amongſt us has ventured to aſſert the Juſtice and Neceſſity of a Toleration in its due and full Extent. An Author that on more Accounts than one, is

to be eſteemed a Patron of the Liberties of Humane Nature, and a Guardian of the Happineſs and Safety of Civil Societies, and who has by his Writings been moſt ſerviceable to Mankind, in enlightning their Minds, and in improving their Underſtandings, for which he muſt never expect forgiveneſs by Men of the Pamphleteer's Principles.

7. But to return: Tho our Author ſuppoſes it no ſmall Crime (*P.* 15.) for the Parliament to judg of Matters of Religion; yet he grievouſly complains, that *notwithſtanding the urgency of the Occaſion, no Relief has been effected that way; and tho the Commons have a ſtanding Committee for Religion, nothing (as I remember) has ſince the Revolution been done by them in behalf of it.*

But what can Men in a Legiſlative Capacity do more for Religion, than (beſides puniſhing Vice and Immorality) to protect every one in worſhipping God as they judg moſt agreeable to his Will, and give them the beſt Opportunity of informing themſelves of his Mind? And have they not done this, by granting a Toleration, and by refuſing a Bill for reſtraining the Liberty of the Preſs?

8. In ſhort; when the Clergy had corrupted the Chriſtian, as much as the Heathen Prieſts had Natural Religion, it pleaſed God, out of his great Goodneſs, that the *Noble Art of Printing* ſhould be diſcovered, whereby Men could with eaſe communicate their Thoughts to the World; and ſome free-ſpirited Men (who durſt judg with their own Underſtandings) doing this, and Copies of their Works being diſperſed,

diſperſed, it cauſed many to perceive how miſerably they had been impoſed on by their Spiritual Guides, which (as it may well be imagined) ſtrangely alarm'd the Kingdom of Darkneſs, of which I ſhall give but one Inſtance.

Cardinal *Woolſey* (Lord *Herb.* Hiſt. of *H.* 8.) in a Letter to the Pope, tells him, "That his "Holineſs could not be ignorant what divers "Effects the new Invention of Printing had "produced; that it had brought in and re-"ſtored Books and Learning, and had been the "occaſion of thoſe Sects and Schiſms that daily "appear in the World, and chiefly in *Germa-*"*ny*, where Men begin to queſtion the Faith "and Tenets of the Church; that if this were "ſuffered, the common People, beſides other "Dangers, might come to believe there was "not ſo much need of the Clergy. The Prieſts, to ſecure themſelves from any harm from this new Invention, did their utmoſt to hinder any thing from being printed but what was on their own ſide, and by that means to turn this dreadful Engine on their Enemies, which as far as it was quickly and ſteddily put in Execution, had its deſired Effect in preſerving of Popery; but in thoſe Places where (by the Connivance of the Government, or otherwiſe) this Method was not ſtrictly obſerved, the People threw off the Popiſh Yoke, and the generality of the Clergy were forced to comply; yet loth to forgo their beloved Empire over the Conſciences of Men, they quickly endeavoured to make the People pay the ſame Obedience to their Determinations as they formerly did to the Romiſh Clergy; and

and as they made uſe of the ſame Arguments and the very ſame Method to enſlave them, ſo they were no leſs zealous to hinder the Liberty of the Preſs (which puts me in mind of what *Le Clerc* obſerves at the latter end of the Life of *Nazianzen*, that tho Theology is ſubject to Revolutions, as well as Empire, and has undergone conſiderable Changes, yet that the Humour of the Divines is not much altered;) but the Powers the Clergy claimed to themſelves being inconſiſtent with the Principles of the Reformation, and in *England* with the Oath of Supremacy, and that Power the Laws have inveſted the King with, there is nothing ſo contradictory as their pretended Power, and that which they are forced to own does belong to the Magiſtrate: So that our high Church-men are not conſiſtent with themſelves, no not in one Point, but (what is worſe) aſſert ſuch Principles as make the Reformation it ſelf criminal; and which muſt unavoidably oblige a Man that acts agreeable to thoſe Principles, to return to the Popiſh Yoke, as ſhall be demonſtrated in my next Diſcourſe. It was theſe Principles that made the moſt judicious Perſon the Church could ever brag of, the famous *Chillingworth*, return to the Church of *Rome*, and continue there a long time: But what his Principles were upon leaving it, and how inconſiſtent with that of High Church, may be learn'd by what I have quoted of him. And I could give an Inſtance of one who in the late Reign going into the World from the Univerſity, (where he had a long time imbibed theſe Notions of the Power of the Clergy) and meeting with the Romiſh Prieſts,

Prieſts, who then were very buſy, they quickly ſhow'd him the Inconſiſtency of the Reformation and the Proteſtant Religion with theſe Powers; which had that Influence over him, as to cauſe him (who did not then ſuſpect the falſeneſs of thoſe Notions owned by both Churches) to join with them, who are conſiſtent with themſelves in the Powers they claim, until ſo many particular Abſurdities in their Practice made him happily examine theſe Notions; which had like to have coſt him dear, for refuſing to join with them after *Candlemaſs* 87, and receiving the Sacrament the next Opportunity, the *Eaſter* after, in his College Chappel, it expoſed him to the Malice and Revenge of the Popiſh Prieſts, (then in the height of their Proſperity) who of all Men will the leaſt ſpare a relapſed Heretick. But why do I inſtance in Particulars, ſince it's theſe extravagant Notions of the Clergy's Power that ſupport the Romiſh Cauſe, and make thouſands embrace that Religion; for Men with ſcorn and contempt reject contradictory and inconſiſtent Opinions. But of theſe things more fully in my next Diſcourſe, where I doubt not to demonſtrate, as far as a thing of ſuch a Nature is capable, that the Clergy are ſo far from having theſe Powers by the Law of God, that there is no Power or Juriſdiction whatever belongs to them by that Law. But to return;

9. I'll demand of this Author, Should a Convocation determine contrary to his Judgment, (which may eaſily enough be ſuppoſed, ſince he ſaith, *P.* 7. That *there is no Order, Degree, or Place amongſt us, wholly free from the Infection of under-*

undermining or overthrowing the Catholick Faith) whether he could, or (were it in his Power) would renounce his Faith for the ſake of the caſting Voice or Voices in a Convocation? If he dares not ſay he will proſtitute his Belief at ſo vile a Rate, Why ſhould he ſuppoſe others either ſhould or would do ſo? Tho I believe he may aſſure himſelf that there's none amongſt thoſe he calls *infected*, ſo little Chriſtians and Proteſtants, but what think they ought to be able to give a better Account and Reaſon of their Faith than the Determination of a Convocation now-a-day, eſpecially when they know that not only Particular but General Councils, have conſtantly made their Market of their Faith, and always ſold it to the faireſt Chapmen; and that it was a meer Accident that eſtabliſhed the preſent Orthodoxy; *Theodoſius* being bred that Way, and ſo reſolved to force his Subjects to be of the ſame Sentiments, and his living a long time ſo as to ſurvive moſt of the Hereticks, was the Cauſe that there were no more Emperors to make the Chriſtian World become again Arian: And the Cruelty uſed to eſtabliſh Orthodoxy, would at the ſame Rate have eſtabliſhed Mahometiſm: So that the mere Authority of a Convocation can no ways influence Hereticks, who by being out of the Church, ſhow how little they value the Authority of Church-men. And for any Power, by which they might be forced, he very honeſtly owns the Church has none over them: For (*P.* 27.) you *pretend not to meddle with thoſe without, nor to exerciſe any Act of Juriſdiction over them, but only to frame Rules and Deciſions*

ciſions that ſhall hold within your ſelves, and to govern and judg your own Members. And the Deſign of a Convocation is, it ſeems, to cenſure ſome of the Church, and make them retract their Opinions: For, (*P.* 13.) *as long as theſe Books paſs uncenſured and unretracted, under the Stile and Name of Men of great Place and Character in the Church, the Miſchief which the Authority they have yet left with ſome Men may be able to do, is not ſufficiently prevented, nor the Scandal wiped off from our Church and Nation.* But what can be more ſcandalous to the Church and Nation, than to force People to lie both to God and Man, by making them retract thoſe Opinions they believe to be true? And nothing can be more abominable than this conſtant practice of the Clergy, in making Men ſolemnly and publickly diſown what in their Hearts they ſtill believe: and this is generally done without the leaſt colour of convincing them, nay without giving them any new Arguments, or any further Time to conſider; and leſt they ſhould *relapſe*, as they call it, that is, dare to be no longer Hypocrites, they threaten them with greater Puniſhments, and even Death it ſelf. So that if this be the Buſineſs of a Convocation, I know not a more compendious way of making Men Villains.

I have been the longer inſiſting on this Point, to ſhow that the very End and Reaſon that the Author pretends for the Sitting of a Convocation, and the Powers, he ſaith, belong to them of judging of Religious Doctrines for the People, and enforcing Submiſſion and Obedience to their Determinations concerning them, are

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Antiproteſtant and Antichriſtian, and conſequently not to be permitted in any Proteſtant Country.

10. It's one of the moſt important Duties incumbent on the Clergy (as I have ſhown, *Par. 2. Chap. 6.*) to take care that Differences of Opinions (which in this State of Darkneſs and Ignorance are unavoidable) ſhould not deſtroy Love and Charity, nor diſturb the Peace of the Church, by erecting Schiſms and Diviſions: But the Pious Clergy, ſo far from doing this, have made the direct contrary their almoſt ſole Buſineſs, by impoſing their own Conceptions (inſtead of the Word of God) on the People, and by induſtriouſly contriving ſuch Expreſſions as are the likelieſt to create Diviſions, and then curſing, damning, perſecuting, and ruining them for thoſe Diviſions themſelves were the ſole Cauſe of; and this has been their conſtant Practice in their Synods and Councils. And therefore it's not at all ſtrange that that Great and Good Man, the late ABp ſhould ſay (what, *P. 8.* of the *Letter*, is objected to him) *That he never knew any Good come from thoſe ſort of Meetings:* But he is not the only Perſon has ſaid it; for *Gregory Nazianzen* (*Epiſt. 55.*) has long ago ſaid, (when Hereſy was more univerſal than now it is) *That he was reſolved to avoid all Aſſemblies of Biſhops, becauſe he never ſaw a Synod that had any Succeſs, but what did rather encreaſe than leſſen the Evil; without any Exaggeration the Spirit of Diſpute and Ambition is ſo very great in them, that it cannot be expreſſed.* And this was not ſpoke in a Heat, or dropt careleſly from him, for he repeats it, not only in his *65th, 71ſt,*

72d

72*d* and 74*th* Letters, but in his Poetical Pieces, *P.* 80. where he ſaith, *He will never go to any Synod, becauſe there's nothing to be heard there but Geeſe and Cranes, who fight without underſtanding one another: There one may ſee Diviſions, Quarrels, and ſhameful Things which were hid before, and are collected into one place with cruel Men.*

And *Baſilius* (in his 102 *Epiſt.*) is of the ſame Mind, in reſolving carefully to avoid all Aſſemblies of Biſhops, of whom he ſaith moſt ſevere things, even worſe than *Nazianzen.* It cannot be ſuppoſed that theſe Good Men (and I might add, all that had any Ingenuity amongſt them) would ſay ſo very ſhameful things of their Brethren, were there not very great Diſorders amongſt them: But I need not mention the Opinions of particular Perſons, when the Church-Hiſtory ſufficiently ſhews there can ſcarce be more Scolding, Wrangling, Diſorder and Confuſions in a Bear-Garden, than there has conſtantly been in thoſe ſort of Meetings: So that one would be apt to think there was ſome Ground for what the Great *Epiſcopius* ſaith in his *Inſtitutes*, That *the Biſhops led on by Fury, Faction and Madneſs, did not ſo much compoſe as huddle up Creeds for the Chriſtian World.* And conſidering the Heats and Animoſities, as well as differences of Opinions amongſt the Clergy, no better Effect at preſent can be expected from a Convocation, which inſtead of deſtroying, will in all likelihood encreaſe Diviſions, widen our Breaches, heighten our Animoſities, and rend and tear the Church, by excluding all thoſe (who are no contemptible Number) that could not agree with the Sentiments

ments of the prevailing Party, and treating them (according to uſual Cuſtom) as Hereticks. And what Thoughts (prejudicial to the State as well as the Church) this Diſgrace, and the loſs of their Preferments, may inſpire them with; or what a Ferment by their inſtigation it may cauſe in Peoples Minds, cannot well be imagined. The Confuſion was ſo great after the Council of *Nice*, that the good Emperor begs of his Biſhops to vouchſafe him peaceable Days and quiet Nights, that he might continue his Expedition againſt the Infidels, and not be obliged to return to keep them in order. And in all probability, the Conſequence of a Convocation would be a great interruption to the King's proſecuting the War againſt the Enemies of our Religion and Liberties, tho I hope our Author has no ſuch Deſign in ſeeming ſo very zealous for a Convocation; yet who can think him in earneſt when he ſuppoſeth (*pag.* 7.) The next Age will not believe a Religion revealed by Heaven, except the Convocation make ſuch a Declaration? Which is ſo far from being true, that nothing would more expoſe revealed Religion than the Heats and Quarrels, and other Irregularities that would happen in a Convocation. If Synods are ſo neceſſary to preſerve the Chriſtian Religion, how comes it that Mahometiſm (propagated at firſt but by a private Man) ſhould in ſpight of frequent Councils get in moſt Places ſo much the better; and that in others nothing but the Name of the Chriſtian Religion ſhould be left, the Councils having deſtroyed the Eſſence of it, by introducing Ignorance, Superſtition, Uncharitable-

charitableneſs, Perſecution, Popery, and Idolatry. And no conſidering Man can doubt, that had Convocations ever ſince the Reformation, not only met, but debated of Religious Matters as they thought fit, as frequently as our Author pretends it's their Right, the Clergy long before now had aſſumed to themſelves a Papal Power; or if ſince the Revolution only, a Toleration as well as all other Religious Matters had been left to a Convocation, which was to ſit as frequently, and to debate Matters as freely as the Parliament does, but it would have cauſed ſuch a Ferment both in Church and State as would have deſtroyed both: ſo that nothing has ſhown the Prudence and Wiſdom of our Proteſtant Anceſtors more than not allowing them thoſe Powers our Author ſo zealouſly pleads for.

11. Nothing more preſerved the Church in the late King's Reign, than the Diſſenting Gentry and Nobility unanimouſly refuſing to join with him in taking off the Teſt and Penal Laws, for which the Church-men were not wanting in words to expreſs their grateful Acknowledgment, and to promiſe them upon the firſt Opportunity all the Kindneſs imaginable; which when it was in their Power, and the Convocation was deſired to come to ſome Accommodation with the Diſſenters, they thought (notwithſtanding their former Obligations) that Faith was as little to be kept with Schiſmaticks, as the Council of *Conſtance* did with Hereticks: But this is not the worſt.

A great many, it's to be feared, of our high Church-men were ſo diſſatisfied with the Go-

vernment's depriving them of the Power of perſecuting their Brethren, (which is almoſt as great a Grievance as to be perſecuted themſelves) that they have ever ſince hated the Government, and have endeavoured, as far as they durſt, to ſubvert it; tho they cannot but be ſenſible that at the ſame time they attempt the Ruin both of Church and State, and of themſelves into the bargain. But where will not ſome Mens Spleen and Revenge carry them? And it's plain, 'tis for want of their beloved Perſecution they are thus prejudiced, for none were more zealous (notwithſtanding the *Oxford* Decree) than theſe Church-men to Aſſociate in defence of their Legal Rights, and for the Security of the Prince of *Orange*'s Perſon, and did ſeveral other things more inconſiſtent with their former Notions, than any they now pretend to ſcruple; but none ſeems more inveterate than this Author, who (knowing nothing endears the King to the People more than his Zeal for the Proteſtant Religion, and ſecuring to them the quiet Enjoyment of it with the daily hazard of his Life) has endeavoured to take off their Affections, by maliciouſly inſinuating as if his Majeſty were a Perſon of no Religion: For not to mention his Hints and ſly Inſinuations, as *P.* 27. That *thoſe that were againſt the Sitting of a Convocation, were Enemies to all Religion, and the Profeſſors of it*; and, *P.* 23. to this effect, as if *Men whiſpered that it was not the King's Judgment and Piety that inclined him to be preſent at the Service of the Church*, and a great deal more to the ſame purpoſe; he ſpeaks out more plainly, *P.* 22. where he

he takes occaſion, (nothing to the purpoſe) after he has ſaid, *As for his Majeſty's good Will, we do not, I ſay we will not in the leaſt doubt it,* to add, *Tho ſome, who would be thought to underſtand his Mind beſt, and to be moſt in his Intereſts, are pleaſed in all Companies to admire and celebrate a Prince of no Religion as the beſt of Governours:* Which is more malicious, than if he had ſaid it himſelf in direct Terms, ſince it's the likelieſt way, not only to make it the more creditable by laying it at their Door who pretend to know the King beſt, and to be moſt in his Intereſt, and to make them as well as his Majeſty, be thought Men of no Religion, for not only once or twice, but in all Companies admiring and celebrating a Prince of no Religion as the beſt of Governours, but to make the King diſcharge his Friends from any Truſt about him when he hears they ſuppoſe ſuch diſhonourable Things of him, and to imploy his Enemies, Men of our Author's Principles: So that *Fenwick*, it ſeems, is not the only Perſon the Party has put on this helliſh Contrivance of aſperſing thoſe that are moſt in the King's Intereſt, knowing they have no way of doing their Buſineſs like creating in his Majeſty a Jealouſy of his true Friends. And our *Author*, that he might not be thought to ſpeak without Book, endeavours to make the King guilty, not only of a Breach of his Declaration, but of his Coronation-Oath, in not cauſing the Convocation to ſit and act as frequently as he has done the Parliament. It's true, after this he ſaith, with his uſual way of Hypocriſy, *P. 63. We are ſure his ſacred Majeſty did never oppoſe their Sitting and Acting.* But how could

he oppoſe it otherwiſe than by not calling them to ſit and act, which our Author ſays by his Coronation-Oath he is bound to do? Which brings me to his Law-part, in which (as I ſhall ſhew in a few words) he is as much miſtaken as in his Divinity.

12. He aſſerts, Firſt, That the Convocation is the higheſt Court of Judicature, having Juriſdiction in Crimes Eccleſiaſtical.

Secondly, That a Convocation is not only to meet as often as the Parliament, but has the ſame Right to debate as freely of Eccleſiaſtical Matters, as the Parliament has about Temporals.

Thirdly, That a Convocation is as neceſſary and eſſential to the Church and Conſtitution, and does bind all People in Eccleſiaſticals, as a Parliament does in Civils.

As to the firſt: If a Convocation be a Court of Judicature, they muſt have Cognizance of Original Cauſes, or of Appeals. If they had to do with any Cauſes in the firſt Inſtance, they would have a greater Power than either Houſe of Parliament claims; and our Author dares not aſſert that a Convocation has greater Power belonging to it than a Parliament. Beſides, by 23 *H.* 8. none is to be cited out of his own Dioceſs except in ſome few Caſes, whereof Hereſy is one, for which the Arch-Biſhop of the Province, and he only, can ſummon a Man out of his own Dioceſs; by whom (24 *H.* 8.) Cauſes were finally to be determined, except Cauſes touching the King, his Heirs and Succeſſors, for which there was an Appeal to the Prelats, Abbots, and Priors of the Upper Houſe, (and this excepted Caſe confirms the Law in the non-excep-

excepted:) And by a Statute made the next Year, (*C.* 19.) *All manner of Appeals, of what Nature, Condition or Quality ſoever they be of, or what Cauſe or Matter ſoever they ſhall concern, ſhall be made according to* 21 H. 8. *with this further Proviſo, That there lieth an Appeal from the Arch-Biſhop's Courts to the King in* Chancery, *from whence no further Appeal is to be had or made.* Which cuts off all Pretences from the Convocation of having any Juriſdiction now, whatever they had in the Popiſh Times.

13. As to the ſecond; Whether a Convocation is to be ſummoned as often as a Parliament; tho he has offered nothing that looks like a Proof of it, yet that I ſhall not diſpute with him at preſent, but I ſhall whether they have a Right to confer about making any Canons without a ſpecial Licence from the King: Which tho he aſſerts, he cannot bring one Lawyer of his Opinion, they being all againſt him, as is the conſtant Practice of the Clergy, as zealous as they are to maintain their Privileges, who never ſince 25 *H.* 8. attempted the making any Canons without the King's Licence firſt obtained under the Broad-Seal of *England*; which our Author ſuppoſes to be but a meer Compliment, and a bare Mark of Reſpect: And he affirms, *To ſay otherwiſe, is to wound the Liberties of a Parliament through thoſe of a Convocation.*

But is there no difference between the Commons deſiring, by the Mouth of their Speaker, Liberty of Speech (that is, that the King would not be diſpleaſed with their Freedom in ſpeaking of thoſe things they have a Right to debate) and a ſolemn Licence under the Broad-Seal

of *England*, to enable the Convocation to confer about ſuch or ſuch particular Points? It's ridiculous to ſuppoſe the Broad-Seal is uſed with ſo much Formality for the ſake of mere Compliments, to convey nothing but a Right the Convocation had without it: The Broad-Seal is ſo neceſſary to enable the Clergy to make Canons, that all that is done without it is null and void; and ſo would it be in reſpect of Parliaments themſelves, if they were to have ſuch a Licence to debate of any particular Point, in order to make it a Law. As for Inſtance, by an Act made 10 *H.* 7. call'd *Poining's Act*, it's provided, *That all ſuch Bills as ſhall be offered to the Parliament in* Ireland, *ſhall be firſt tranſcribed hither under the Great Seal of that Kingdom; and having received Approbation, ſhall be put under the Broad-Seal here, and ſo offered to that Parliament: And if a Parliament be held contrary to this Form, it ſhall be deemed null and void.* And in *Scotland* the Parliament, until this Revolution, could debate of nothing but what the Lords of the Articles had firſt agreed ſhould be debated.

The Act of 25 *H.* 8. (which we ſay forbids the Clergy to confer about making any Canons without the King's Licence firſt obtained) was made at the Petition of the Clergy, and in the very words of that Petition: And certainly they were good Judges of the Senſe of their own Petition, and how far they meant to reſtrain themſelves. And we find that the Clergy * being aſſembled in Convocation not many Years

* *Dr.* Burnet's *Hiſt. Reform.* Part 1. Col'ect. N. 17.

Years after, 1 *Ed.6.* (therefore ſeveral of them the ſame Perſons at whoſe Petition the Act was made) do moſt humbly deſire, that the King's Licence for them may be obtained according to the Effect of the ſaid Statutes, (25 and 27) authoriſing them *to attempt, entreat and commune of ſuch Matters, and therein freely to give their Conſents, which otherwiſe they may not do upon pain and peril premiſed*, that is, of being fined and impriſoned during the King's Will.

And now we come to the Act it ſelf, which recites in the Preamble the Petition and Submiſſion of the Clergy, wherein they promiſe, *in verbo Sacerdotii, That they never from henceforth would preſume to attempt, alledg, claim, enact*, &c. *any new Canons, Conſtitutions*, &c. *unleſs the King's Licence may be to them had, to make*, &c. *the ſame, and his Majeſty do give his moſt Royal Aſſent and Authority in that behalf. And be it enacted according to the Submiſſion*, &c. *That the Clergy ſhall not preſume to attempt*, &c. *unleſs they have the King's moſt Royal Aſſent and Licence to make*, &c. So that it's evident the King's Licence is antecedently neceſſary to their making, or even attempting (which includes all conferring or debating in order to the making) any new Canons; and that they are to be puniſhed, unleſs they have the King's Authority on that behalf. And none but our Author can be ſo abſurd as to think the King's confirming the Canons the Convocation has made, is a Licence to them to make, or attempt the making new ones: Is the King's ſigning an Act a Licence to the Parliament to make a new one? But the Author's Ingenuity in reciting this

this Act, and his Reaſoning upon it, is much alike.

14. The Author demands, Why are the Clergy called to a Convocation, if when they come they are not to act?

The Convocation was once a Limb of Parliament, and the Writ they are now ſummoned by, is not much different from that of the Commons; and no doubt did then meet, were Adjourned, Prorogued, Diſſolved with the reſt of the Parliament; and this continued till *H.* 8. when they loſt all their Parliamentary Rights but of Taxing themſelves, for the doing of which they were ſtill ſummoned according to the Antient Form; and tho they have now loſt that Right too, and ſo the Reaſon of ſummoning wholly ceaſeth, yet the Writs are iſſued out ſtill after the ſame manner. It is not their being ſummoned by this Writ that alone makes them a Synod for Eccleſiaſtical Matters: for in the Popiſh Times they were always ſummoned with the reſt of the Parliament, yet they were not a Synod, nor could not act as ſuch without Authority from the Pope; and inſtead of any ſuch Authority now, the King makes them a Synod, and gives them Power to enact Canons by Licence under the Broad-Seal: and this with Submiſſion I take to be the true ſtate of the Caſe.

15. As to the third, that a Convocation is as eſſential and neceſſary to the Church and Conſtitution, and binds all People in Eccleſiaſticals, as a Parliament does in Temporals: I anſwer.

If the Clergy have another Right to make Canons beſides the Will of the Legiſlative Pow-

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er, *viz.* a Divine Right, their Canons would be valid without the King's confirming them; nor could an Act of Parliament abrogate or annul any of thoſe Canons made by a Spiritual Authority; which is ſo far from depending on theirs, that the Parliament it ſelf is ſubject to them in thoſe Matters; nor could they hinder them from ſitting when, and as long as they had a Mind to, becauſe they that have a Divine Right to make Eccleſiaſtical Laws, muſt have the ſame Right to ſit in order to make them, which is but neceſſary to the making them: and in a word, they muſt be as abſolute and independant in all things relating to Eccleſiaſticals, as the Lay-ſtate is in Civils; but there cannot be two Independant or Legiſlative Powers about the ſame or different things, for then People would be obliged to obey contrary Commands about the ſame things, or different Commands at the ſame Time, which is impoſſible; but that Power which can annul the Commands of the other, muſt be able to command in all Caſes, and be alone Supreme, becauſe as great a Power is required to take off as to lay on. If therefore the Civil Power can annul any Eccleſiaſtical Laws, the Convocation can have no Power but what is dependant on theirs, which they can abridg, curtail, or annul, as they think fit; therefore it's abſurd to pretend that a Convocation has the ſame Rights or Privileges, or is as eſſential to the Conſtitution as a Parliament, without whoſe Authority no Laws relating to Church or State can be made. And a Convocation is ſo far from being neceſſary to make Laws for the Church, that

that it's uſurping the Rights of the Engliſh Churches, or Chriſtian People of *England*, who are to be tied up by no Laws about indifferent things (which alone are ſubject to humane Empire) whether of a Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Nature, but by their own Conſent given in Parliament. And I know no Law of Chriſtianity that deprives them of this Right, which from the firſt ſpreading of the Goſpel here they have always claimed. There were no Laws in the Britiſh and Saxon Times that concerned the whole Church, but (as our Hiſtorians teſtify) were made by the ſame Power that made the Temporal Laws, and were put in execution by the ſame Perſons. The tearing the Eccleſiaſtical Power from the Temporal was the curſed Root of Antichriſt; thoſe Powers were not diſtinct in *England*, nor in moſt Nations, till the See of *Rome* got the Aſcendant; then, and not till then, did the Clergy attempt to bind the Laity by thoſe Laws they never conſented to: but their deſign was never brought to perfection, for ſuch was the Genius of a Government built upon this noble Foundation, *That no Man ought to be bound by a Law he does not conſent to*, that as muffled up in Darkneſs and Superſtition as our Anceſtors were, yet that Notion ſeemed to be ſo ſtrongly engraven in their Nature that nothing could deface it; and accordingly we often find them proteſting that this and the other thing does not bind them becauſe done without their Conſent *; that they would not be bound

* *Rot. Parl.* 40 Edw. 3. *Num.* 7, 8. *Rot. Parl.* 5 Edw. 3. *Art.* 45. *Rot. Parl.* 6 Rich. 2. *Num.* 52.

bound by any Ordinances of the Clergy without their Aſſent; that they would not ſubject themſelves to the Clergy no more than their Anceſtors had done: And 25 *H.* 8. *cap.* 21. they tell the King, that beſides Acts of Parliament, *The People are bound by no other Laws but what they have taken at their free Liberty by their own Conſent to be uſed amongſt them, and have bound themſelves by long Uſe and Cuſtom to the obſervance of the ſame.*

No marvel if we find this People ſubmitting to nothing in Religion, but what was ordained by themſelves. *De majoribus omnes*, was one of their Fundamental Conſtitutions before they came hither †, and ſo it has continued to this Day; and Matters of Religion were amongſt their *Majora*, even before they received Chriſtianity. And what neither the Pagan nor Popiſh Prieſts could cheat or ſcare them from, our Author will find a hard Matter to harangue them out of. If no Canon is valid that is contrary to the Cuſtom or Law of this Realm; How can a Canon oblige contrary to this moſt antient Cuſtom and Fundamental part of the Conſtitution of the Peoples being obliged by no Laws but of their own making? What's become of the boaſted Engliſh Liberty, if they may be excommunicated, and conſequently impriſoned for Contempt or Diſobedience to a Law they never made?

This, I think, is ſufficient to ſhow the Frivolouſneſs of our Author's Reaſons for making his

† Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum, C. 11.

his Majesty guilty of the breach of his Coronation-Oath, in denying those Rights to the Convocation he pretends are their due; which I think I have proved to be contrary both to the Law of God and the Realm. I shall therefore conclude, praying that *the God of Patience would grant* that no Priests of this Man's Principles, in or out of Convocation, may hinder Men from *being like-minded one to another*, nor disturb the Peace of Church or State.

FINIS.

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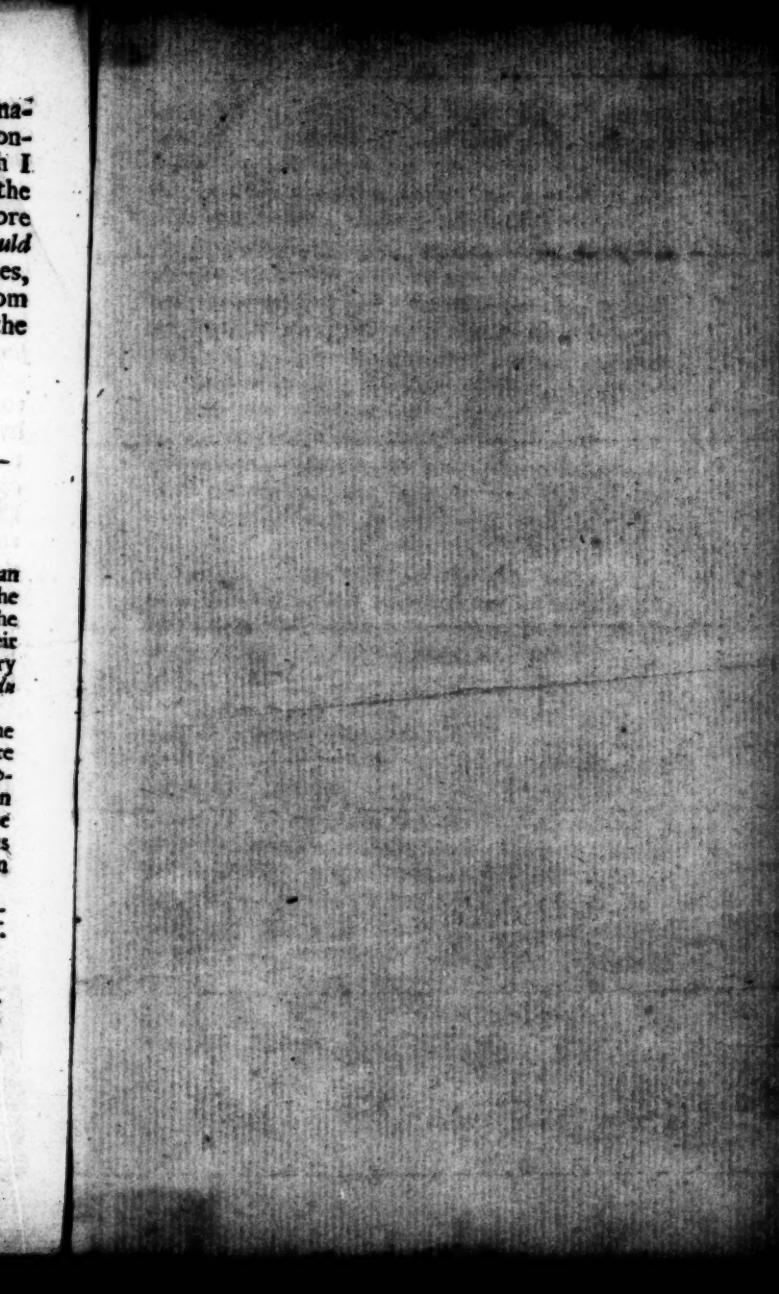
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